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**Identity and Conflict in Cultural and Geo-Political Contexts (Part I)**

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<b>Sorina GEORGESCU</b> (Hyperion University, Bucharest)	
Foreword.....	4
<b>Maureen Daly GOGGIN</b> (Arizona State University)	
Knitting Social Identity: Yarn Grafitti in Transnational Craftivist Protests.....	9
<b>Anthony LACK</b> (Kenai Peninsula College, University of Alaska at Anchorage)	
Recognition, Identity and Citizenship after the End of History.....	26
<b>Serkan ERTIN</b> (Kocaeli University, Turkey)	
Deploying Masculinity in the Transphobic Framework of the Islamic Middle-East.....	34
<b>Estella Antoaneta CIOBANU</b> (Ovidius University, Constanța)	
Iconicity and the Invisible Crisis of Reclaimed Gender Identity: The Case of Agora and the Visible Human Project.....	41
<b>Felix NICOLAU</b> (The Technical University of Civil Engineering, Bucharest)	
Re-scripting in a Postmodern Manner Shakespeare's Plays: Intersemiotic Translations.....	55
<b>Maria IBÁÑEZ RODRÍGUEZ</b> (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)	
Hippies and Hell's Angels: Two Sides of a Coin-terculture.....	60
<b>Barbara A. NELSON</b> (University of Michigan, USA; University of Bucharest, Romania)	
Kennedy and Kahlo: Identity and Gender Issues in Biography.....	69

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## Foreword

"A person's identity is defined as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future" ("Person, Singular Agentic Self and Identity"), according to Peter Weinreich and Wendy Saunderson in their 2005 book entitled *Analyzing Identity: Cross-Cultural, Societal and Clinical Contexts*.<sup>1</sup>

The human being as a literary and philosophical subject comes to the fore starting with the Renaissance. Later on, with Montesquieu and the Enlightenment, we can begin to talk about the nation and its own identity as an object of study, the object of what we call Geopolitics. As the French philosopher was saying in his 1748 book, *The Spirit of the Laws (De l'esprit des lois)*:

Many things govern men: climate, religion, laws, the maxims of the government, examples of past things, mores and manners; a general spirit is formed as a result. To the extent that, in each nation, one of these causes acts more forcefully, the others yield to it. Nature and climate almost alone dominate savages; manners govern the Chinese; laws tyrannize Japan; in former times mores set the tone in Lacedaemonia; in Rome it was set by the maxims of government and the ancient mores. (Montesquieu 310)<sup>2</sup>

"Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland. Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island. Who rules the World-Island commands the World" (xviii), was saying British geographer Halford Mackinder, in his influential 1919 book *Democratic Ideals and Reality*.<sup>3</sup> "Who controls the rimland rules Eurasia. Who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world" (xxviii), continued Dutch-American geostrategist Nicholas Spykman in his 1942 book *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*.<sup>4</sup>

Identity, whether that of a person, of a group, or of a country, has been a subject of debate in many disciplines throughout history.

Philosophy derived it from the Latin word 'identitas,' with the sense of 'sameness.' With René Descartes (1596-1650), we have the famous saying "I think, therefore I am," "I think, I exist"; with Hegel (1770-1831), minds struggle with the domination of one over the other; for Nietzsche (1844-1900) the soul is an ever-changing entity, while for Heidegger (1889-1976), the conscience of death is the one that makes people look for an identity. The selfhood, defined as "who I am" is distinct from the sameness, defined as a third person perspective, in Paul Ricoeur's view.

The 'self,' the elements that separate one person from the other and the roles one is supposed to play in a given society, are the object of Psychology, while the 'selfhood,' that is, the uniqueness and

<sup>1</sup> Peter Weinreich and Wendy Saunderson (Eds): *Analyzing Identity: Cross-Cultural, Societal and Clinical Contexts*. New York: Routledge, 2005. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller & Harold S. Stone (Eds). *Montesquieu. The Spirit of the Laws*. Cambridge University Press, 2002. Print.

<sup>3</sup> Halford Mackinder. *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. Washington: NDU Press, 1981. Print.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Spykman. *America's Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2007. Print

individuality of one person, considering both the common ancestry plus the common biological characteristics and the social constructionist theory, makes the object of Social Anthropology.

An individual's belonging to a certain social group and the intergroup behavior, such as the in-group favoritism, or the interpersonal behavior, the self-esteem and the self-image, or the fact of group affiliations, define the analysis of sociological identity. A common nationality or culture will define ethnic identity, while 'identity politics,' i.e. location, gender, race, history, language, sexuality, religion etc, will make the object of cultural identity.

Most recently, computers and the internet created the digital identity, which strictly refers to cyberspace and consists of the set of data a person is required to provide when opening an email account, or any page on socialization sites. To some, this is just a 'constructed presentation of oneself' to which they apply Dorian Wiszniewski and Richard Coyne's concept of the "mask" from their chapter "Mask and Identity. The Hermeneutics of Self- Construction in the Information Age," from Ann Renninger and Wesley Shumar's 2004 book *Building Virtual Communities. Learning and Change in Cyberspace*.<sup>5</sup>

This would be, of course, a general definition of our topic. Passing from the general to the particular, the papers in this volume range from social identity, citizenship, to gender, Christianity, post-modern re-writings, counter-culture, particular political and literary figures of America.

In her article "Knitting Social Identity: Yarn Graffiti in Transnational Craftivist' Protests," Maureen Daly Goggin deals with choice and the making of identities, through a feminist lens: by analyzing "protests conducted by yarn bombers." She starts by underlying the difference between old times knitting and its post-modernist use, that of exploring "political and social issues" and of defying "the standards of mass production and conformity that we are bombarded with in the media" as she quotes "Contemporary knitter Donna Druchunas." After a summary of identity theories (Michel Foucault, Henri Tajfel, John C Turner, Simone de Beauvoir, Elizabeth Bell, Donna Haraway etc), she passes on to "examine the intersections between craft activism and social identity formation," with special reference to "yarn bombing," which is, as she argues, "a relatively new form of outsider street art that is popping all over the world in unexpected places." Such manifestations turn knitting into a "social agent of change" and things, that is, "non-human objects", such as "doors, locks, planes, homes, belongings" into "actors," the pictures in this article saying it all. Therefore, as Maureen Daly Goggin convincingly argues, the emphasis is on the making of social identity, not on any pre-established pattern, as it used to be. Moreover, "by engaging in practices that have been gendered in the past, yarn bombers (men and women) seek to reclaim, redefine, and repurpose these 'traditionally feminized' activities:

Finally, the practice of yarn bombing challenges many assumptions about arts and crafts (i.e., high and low arts, male and female practices, handmade and mass made, hand wrought and machine wrought, hierarchical arrangements of superior and subordinate, official and unofficial, public and private spaces, and personal and political. By using domesticated practices to call attention to public problems, yarn bombers build a social identity of personal, private, public identity.

A much more theoretical approach belongs to Anthony Lack in his article "Recognition, Identity and Citizenship after the End of History," with justice vs. injustice as his main focus and "recognition" as his key concept. This he defines, first in W. E. B. DuBois's terms, as "always looking at one's self through the eyes of others." Then, it is something we all need "in order to develop a secure identity and to feel at home in our social environment," in G.W.F Hegel's vision. In a much more contemporary vision, "recognition is a

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<sup>5</sup> Dorian Wiszniewski & Richard Coyne. "Mask and Identity. The Hermeneutics of Self-Construction in the Information Age." *Building Virtual Communities. Learning and Change in Cyberspace*. Eds. Ann Renninger & Wesley Shumar. Cambridge University Press, 2004: 191-215. Print.

normative ideal for measuring the degree of justice in social interaction,” something that will be further on expanded in this article, since it involves rights, “resource allocation, territorial identity claims, hiring preferences, exemption from hunting and fishing regulations, domestic partnership benefits, exclusive forms of political representations.” The author’s concern for formerly excluded social categories, such as the “property-less, women and African-Americans” is also expressed in this article, thus contradicting the 18th century definition of citizenship. He also contradicts Michel Foucault’s approach, which fails to take into consideration the non-Anglo children forced to speak English or “that joking about gays and lesbians has psychologically harmful effects.”

Speaking of recognition and the LGBT, Serkan Ertin offers us an analysis of gender and transgender in his article “Deploying Masculinity in the Transphobic Framework of the Islamic Middle-East.” He starts from Judith Butler’s definition of gender as not something intrinsic to any person, and as having a performative nature. He continues with examples from Turkey and Iran, which are meant to “examine the reified role of masculinity and the traditional polarity of Man/Woman in the harassment, insult, hate murders, persecutions, victimizations, and obligatory sex change surgeries LGBT individuals in the Islamic context are exposed to.” Key concepts in his article are “transvestites,” “transgenderists,” and “transexuals,” categories which are not easily accepted today even by certain “gay bars,, for instance, in Turkey or in the US. While in Iran, homosexuality is a crime and the “government pays up to half the cost of sex change operations,” in order to maintain “the strict binary Man/Woman.” One ironic contrast between Turkey and Iran is the way the queer is rejected by the transgender, as a sin, in Iran, while in Turkey transgender is rejected by the queer. It is Serkan Ertin’s view that:

....one is not born a man but has to become a man and manliness is as difficult as womanliness in patriarchal societies, but this is often ignored. Just like a woman, a man has to fit in the traditional roles defined for a man and if one fails to do so, he is stigmatized and accused of effeminacy. Transwomen are persecuted and stigmatized only because of the Man’s well-established falsely superior relation to the Woman. Their transgression is considered an offence and challenge to the dominant discourses and ideologies in these countries.

And, of course, it is his recommendation that the LGBT should fight everything—“the education system,” the traditional “religious, political, medical and social discourses”—so as to receive full recognition by subverting the binary divide Male/Female and the alleged superiority of Male over Female.

The issue of gender continues with Estella Ciobanu’s article “Iconicity and the Invisible Crisis of Reclaimed Gender Identity: The Case of *Agora* and the Visible Human Project,” but with only male and female. We first have a female protagonist, the Alexandrian Hypatia, re-written by Spanish Amenabar in his 2009 movie, *Agora*. Then we have a male representation, a genetic one, through the Visible Human Project. It is Estella Ciobanu’s view that Hypatia’s post-modern re-presentation “fails to provide the revisionist, women-empowering story” it claims to be designed as, promoting, instead, the same “old lies in equally biased romanticized garb, especially as regards Hypatia’s death.” Then, as a second major purpose of this movie, Estella Ciobanu sees “racially marked actors (the Christians),” that is “dark-skinned personages, including Jesus,” who make her also think of an “ethnic identity” issue. It is her

contention that Amenabar’s *Hypatia* stands for Western civilization at odds with the fanatical religious zeal and homicidal deeds of the Parabalani/ fringe people/ terrorist (i.e., the early Christians). Hypatia is a female but she is created rather maleish to represent the voice of Western reasoning vs. the ‘War on Terror,’ another Holy War?



as Estella Ciobanu wonders, referring to the 9/11 attacks. Another interesting example of male representation, this time, is British artist Marc Quinn's, VHP-related creations, something which makes our author wonder, again, "what's (in) a portrait," from a genetical point of view:

Indeed, what's (in) a portrait? The NPG website fails to mention the DNA source, even as the Gallery's director sounds so enthusiastic ontologico-epistemologically about this portrait. Not a fallen hair, nor nail clippings but Sulston's sperm (van Rijnsingen 188) had supplied the DNA (allegedly, the alpha and omega of one's identity) superb, though *invisible*, reinforcement of what constitutes one's genetic material! The portrait thus participates, perhaps unwittingly, in a compensatory move able to restore the Visible Male's half-manhood to full potency and all-human representativity.

Male/female identity proves an intriguing issue in all such Marc Quinn's portraits: although not "complacently/ normatively masculine in his choice of subject matter and aesthetic models or techniques," females appear in unrespectable or physically impossible positions and:

The abiding sense of an inherently masculine prescription of identity haunts these works, especially apparent in the clash between title and composition in the Sphinx series and in Sulston's genomic portrait. And the whiteness of marble or of painted bronze is a tell-tale sign of the whiteness of "humanity." Quinn's works still gesture towards the Western crisis of gender and race identity in representation.

We remain in the realm of movie-re-writings and on gender issues with Felix Nicolau's article: "Re-scripting in a Postmodern Manner Shakespeare's Plays: Intersemiotic Translations." Here, we have a "homosexual vein in *Romeo and Juliet*" (*Romeo + Juliet* - 1996) and an "anti-Christian actions of otherwise Christian characters and misogyny in *The Taming of the Shrew*" (2005). Through "body language, political jargon and updated cityscape" we have, in the *Taming* case a dwarf woman—Katherine—portrayed against massive males: however, they are rather feminized and she is rather masculinized. When falling in love, she 'chooses' Petruchio, "an imposing and strong-willed male," who subverts his manly identity by boldly entering "the church in high heels, net stockings, a kilt, and an open blouse that makes visible his hairy chest." He will, however, turn into a "careful father of three toddlers," while Katherine, the "Conservative Member of the British Parliament" is characterized by "impetuous sexual cravings." The "man" in the story, she will have a career and will bring money home, while her husband will only provide "the aristocratic title."

*Romeo and Juliet* means racism in an age of gangs, corporations, "huge steel-and-glass skyscrapers," an African-American actor as Mercutio, actually a "border figure, mediating between Rome's white background and Juliet's Latin one," "Latin, outrageous guys" for the Capulets, with Hawaiian shirts and massive-gold jewellery, and established corporatists for the Montagues. The gay in this story seems to be Mercutio who makes "sexual jokes" with Tybalt, which makes Felix Nicolau appreciate that: "Obviously, the dark-skinned characters are associated with uncontrollable basic instincts." However, this author suggests: "... in postmodern times race is internalized. Any white person can be perceived as 'black,' the color in itself having no real representation. At a symbolic level, in exchange, colors are attributed depending on contextual interests. The victim gets painted in the color of punishment."

We will now leave the gender issues for a while, but not the realm of popular culture, with Maria Ibañez and her "Hippies and the Hell's Angels: Two sides of a *Cointerculture*." Her focus is on the way "identity is constructed, in sociological terms, in the America of the Sixties," through the analysis of "two countercultural movements—apparently opposed—which arose at the same time": the Hippies and the "motorcycle club Hell's Angels." Both trends subverted the American middle-class ideology. Better known to us, Hippies' philosophy meant unity, "liberated sex, use of dope, love and sharing." Less known to us, the Hell's Angels style involved "chains, shades and greasy Levis," "long hair," "beards and bandanas

flapping, earrings, chain whips, swastikas and stripped-down Harleys,” plus the symbols they “would defend to death: the winged death’s-head patch on the back of their leather vests or jackets...” Their method was to scare the population by driving like mad, a population they saw as having “turned their back on them,” that is, the “establishment culture.” They came from the lower classes, people without any kind of property, while the Hippies derived from that very middle-class they were rebelling against, showing support to “those most disadvantaged in society.” Therefore, Hell’s Angels only meant violence, panic, serious problems posed to the police, fame as criminals. While Hippies meant “love, peace, optimism, the ‘flower power’” plus “sexual permissiveness,” plus the importance of the “here” and the “now.” The Angels were fascist, the Hippies were anti-Vietnam War. Hippies defended free, spontaneous sex among multiple partners and also homosexuality, the Angels’ “only special relationship” seems to have been “with their motorcycles,” although “there were ‘mamas’” who “understood that what was expected of them was total availability ‘at any time, in any way, to any Angel, friend of favored guest—individually or otherwise.’ That is, they were common property and could be sold or auctioned.” It is Maria Ibañez’s conclusion that “the Hippies rebelled against the past, against the degradation of a system; the Hell’s Angels fought against the future. Both groups were two sides of the same coin, the so-called counterculture...”

We remain on the same period with Barbara Nelson’s “Kennedy and Kahlo: Identity and Gender Issues in Biography” which “couples” John F. Kennedy “with Frida Kahlo, a Mexican artist known to many as the wife of Diego Rivera, the infamous muralist who was commissioned by the Rockefellers, among other famous capitalists, to decorate U.S. public spaces.” Barbara Nelson’s article sees Kahlo as “the political and gendered Other of this privileged son of a wealthy Irish patrician and former United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom.” Through this parallel, the author underlines the astonishing similarities between “the staunch Communist and the ‘Cold Warrior’”: their poor health, their lack of maternal comfort, their near-death experiences, their corsets and multiple back operations, “their representation as fragmented individuals who were characterized by loneliness and isolation, as well as charismatic gregariousness,” their love of reading, their imaginary friends. Barbara Nelson also discusses the way biographies are written, as depending on “gender and conventions of life studies,” that is, as she refers to Oriana Baddeley’s comparison between Kahlo and Van Gogh, “women’s personal lives overshadow their professional ones. Whereas this is not the case with men.” Or, as she invokes Anne Beer:

...relationships among authors, subjects and audiences vary depending on whether one is dealing with a female or a male. Women’s biographies generate a closer bond between their subject and audience, she argues. Deciding which of the considerations above offer the better insight or, if all play a role, is extremely complex but it is also critically important for future scholarship.



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## Knitting Social Identity: Yarn Grafitti in Transnational Craftivist<sup>6</sup> Protests

**Abstract:** This article examines the intersections between craft activism and social identity formation, focusing specifically on yarn bombing. Globally, women and men are taking up their knitting needles and crochet hooks to make political, social, cultural, aesthetic, and artistic statements. Through this practice, crafters build personal, social, and political identities. Drawing on theories of social, relational, and embodied identity, I examine four case studies of recent protests conducted by yarn bombers. Through a feminist lens, I offer conclusions about the complex intersection between making and social identity formations as well as offer a contingent explanation for the resurgence of crafting now and the paradigm shift in activism through craft.

**Keywords:** activism, craft, craftivism, identity, knitting, crocheting, graffiti

**Motto:** *Choice has replaced obligation as the basis for self-definition.*  
(James E. Cote and Charles G. Levine (1))

**Motto:** *My utilitarian craft has become art. I think every act of making is an act of revolution.* (Betsy Greer (*Knitting* 144))

### Introduction

The practice of knitting and crocheting today looks very similar and yet very different from yarn work ages ago. Contemporary knitter Donna Druchunas's narrative on her experience as a knitter captures this paradox very well. She explains that her grandmother: "knitted because she enjoyed feeling the yarn in her fingers as she formed stitches with her needles and because she loved to wrap her children and grandchildren in handmade sweaters and afghans" (89).

By contrast, Druchunas "found satisfaction in using knitting to explore political and social issues" and: "to defy the standards of mass production and conformity that we are bombarded with in the media. Giving handmade gifts for birthdays and holidays provides a way to share these values with others" (89-90).

Of course, people still knit and crochet sweaters, scarfs, afghans, and other wearable knit items, but they have repurposed yarn work for lots of other kinds of outcomes. Today, increasingly, many more women and men are taking up yarn work of all kinds across the world since the turn to the 21st century (Greer, *Knitting*; Levine and Heimerl; Pentney; Stoller; Wills).

The resurgence of knitting and crochet work is intimately tied up with formations of social identity. At one time, identity formation was an accident of birth. Where someone was born and to whom the person

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<sup>6</sup> Craftivism is craft + activism; that is, activists who use art as a medium. Betsy Greer coined the term "craftivism" in 2003 on her blog *Craftivism: The Newsletter* ("What is Craftivism?") to describe the use of craft in activism. In 2011, *American Craft Magazine* identified her term "craf-tivist" as one of the great moments in the recent history of crafts to mark their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary ("70 Years" 44). Also see Betsy Greer, "Craftivism," where she writes: "Craftivism is a way of looking at life where voicing opinions through creativity makes your voice stronger, your compassion deeper and your quest for justice more infinite."

was born determined a sense of a fairly stable place in society and formed a clear sense of identity, albeit these were to some degree fabrications. Spring forward past theories of individualism, existentialism, and self-actualization—all of which posited that everything begins and ends with the lone, individual self—to the last quarter of the 20th century when Michel Foucault proposed discursive formations as the process by which selves are socially, politically, and culturally conditioned (“Technologies”). While social and political and other kinds of systems powerfully condition humans, identity is also theorized as both relational and embodied. The former view termed “social identity” was introduced by Henri Tajfel and his student John C. Turner in the 1980s. Social identity refers to the ways we identify ourselves in relation to others in a relevant social group (Tajfel and Turner).<sup>7</sup> In terms of embodiment, Foucault begins a dialogue on the latter when he claims that “the body: [is] a surface on which events are inscribed (whereas language marks events and ideas dissolve them” (“Nietzsche” 83). However, the separation among body, language, and ideas as presented by Foucault has been challenged more recently.

By the latter part of the 20th century, feminist, gender, and queer studies scholars posed embodiment and performativity to introduce a construct of identity as constituted social temporality—that is, as understanding that identity is tenuously constituted over time. As early as Simone de Beauvoir who announced “one is not born, but rather, becomes a woman” (267), feminists have argued for understanding gender and identity as performative and embodied (Butler, *Gender and Bodies*). Elizabeth Bell has pushed further to theorize that all aspects of identity—or identities—are performative, being negotiated during a process of becoming. She turns to the metaphor of “kinesis” to argue that identity constitution is a process of breaking and remaking, both sustaining normative boundaries and transgressing them (Bell 13). Donna Haraway usefully observes that: “the concept of a coherent inner self, achieved or innate, is a regulatory fiction that is unnecessary... Identities seem contradictory, partial, and strategic” (135, 155).

She explains the contradictory nature of identity through the concept of *splitting*: “Splitting should be about heterogeneous multiplicities that are simultaneously necessary and incapable of being squashed into isomorphic slots or cumulative lists. The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another” (Haraway 193).

In short, there are always excesses of identity beyond what the embodied knowing self understands and the knowing observer can grasp; these exceed our focus of attention and our language. Scott Cohen adds that in addition to the multiplicities of identity formations, there is an increasing need to link these identities and other disparate experiences into a reflective life narrative that significantly buttresses identity formations. Cohen further argues for “an understanding that identity is not a fixed given, but is *always in process* [which] indicates that experiences can be opportunities for individuals to (re)produce a sense of personal identity” (italics added 10).

While identity is theorized as fluid and dynamic by current scholars (Cote and Levine), it is not posited as seamless but rather as a series of re(dis)locations. For James Cote and Charles Levine, for instance, “choice has replaced obligation as the basis for self-definition” (1). Moreover, as Kay Deaux points out about the fluidity and discontinuities of identity, “such fluctuations in identity, rather than evidence of instability or whimsy, provide evidence of the ways in which people respond to their environment and can make choices that seem most appropriate to that setting” (2).

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<sup>7</sup> For additional information on social identity, see John C. Turner, and Penny Oakes; John C. Turner, and K. J. Reynolds; John C. Turner, “Some Current Issues”; Roy Baumeister; Roy Baumeister and Mark Muraven; Cor van Halen and Jacques Janssen; Alexander Haslam, S. Naomi Ellemers, Stephen David Reicher, Katherine J. Reynolds, and Michael T. Schmitt; S. Alexander Haslam, Stephen David Reicher, and Katherine J. Reynolds; Tom Postmes, and Nyla R. Branscombe.

In Scott Cohen's words: "As identities in contemporary times have become increasingly fragmented and fractured (Hall), most modern Western individuals still seek an idea of self that reflects unity and purpose, a cultural expectation that one's identity reflects 'a patterned and purposeful integration of the me (McAdams)' (8).

Another scholar who explores the ways performativity and embodiment construct identity is David Gaunlett, who proposes identity formation as an ongoing life narrative. In his research, he examines the intersection between creativity and formations of identities, arguing and demonstrating that *making things* is a way of experiencing the multiplicities of one's self-identity. Participants in his study used Legos to build a material metaphor that expressed their sense of their identity. As he notes, *making* is an embodied experience; to craft things is to use one's body in tandem with one's mind as a route to displaying or understanding identity. His research reveals, among other things, the importance of social connections. Gaunlett concludes that: "Despite the dominance of consumer culture... these goals [in building a Lego metaphor to represent one's identity] were not about possessions gained, but about social connections, inner happiness, and a life well lived" (195).

Social connections, inner happiness, and a well-lived life all are fostered for many while they craft and, for some of these folks, while they are participating in activist undertakings as well. In these cases, crafting and activism serve as anchors in the fluid messiness of ongoing identity formation and sense making.

In this article, I examine the intersections between craft activism and social identity formation. I focus on one craft activist strategy—that of yarn bombing—that has emerged recently and that serves as one tool in the formation of contemporary social identity. Yarn bombing is a relatively new form of outsider<sup>8</sup> street art that is popping up all over the world in unexpected places, for unexpected reasons, and toward unexpected ends (see, for example, Greer, *Knitting*; Deadly Knitshade; Tapper; and Werle). Globally, women and men are taking up their knitting needles and crochet hooks to make political, social, cultural, aesthetic, and artistic statements.<sup>9</sup> Through this practice, crafters build personal, social, and political identities. While yarn bombing is conducted for a variety of reasons, in this article, I focus on yarn bombing as a craftivist strategy for mounting a protest.

After reviewing the materiality of yarn activism and contemporary activism, I examine four specific instances of protests conducted by yarn bombers. Drawing on a feminist lens, I offer a conclusion about the complex intersection between *making* and social identity formations as well as offer a contingent explanation for the resurgence of crafting now and the paradigm shift in activism through craft.

### Yarn Graffiti as Materialist Epistemology and Contemporary Activism

Grounding my exploration in "thing theory," I argue that yarn bombing can be understood to constitute a materialist epistemology, what Davis Baird has termed "thing knowledge," "where the things we *make* bear knowledge of the world, on par with the words we speak [emphasis added]" ("Thing Theory" 13; also

<sup>8</sup> On outsider art, see John Maizels; Lucienne Peiry; Lyle Rexer; Rhodes

<sup>9</sup> The origins of yarn bombing are fuzzy at best. Books, magazine articles, newspaper accounts, and blogs typically report that the first recorded yarn bombing took place in Den Helder in the Netherlands in 2004 and that in the US it was founded in 2005 in Houston, Texas by Magda Sayeg. Sayeg, a yarn store owner who rounded up friends to form a group called "Knitta Please," used leftover yarns and unfinished projects to yarn bomb decorative pieces in unusual places around the city. Their activities were a response to the dehumanizing qualities of the urban environment. However, as early as 1992, contemporary Canadian artist Janet Morton was covering up public spaces with crocheted and knitted pieces. Her first installation was a huge knitted sock that she laid on a memorial in Queen's Park, Toronto. The following year she covered a bicycle, calling the installation "Sweater Bike." In 1994 she exhibited a huge mitten she named "Big, Big Mitt" by hanging it off an urban building. See the CCCA Canadian Art Database for images of Janet Morton's knitted work at

[http://ccca.concordia.ca/artists/image\\_timeline.html?languagePref=en&link\\_id=5793&artist=Janet+Morton](http://ccca.concordia.ca/artists/image_timeline.html?languagePref=en&link_id=5793&artist=Janet+Morton).

see Baird, *Thing Theory*). Thing theory is a key tenet in material culture studies, a field dedicated to the things we make. Historian Jules David Prown defines material culture as “the study through artifacts of the beliefs—values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions—of a particular community or society at a given time” (17). His definition is accurate only in so far as most of the scholarship in material culture studies typically follows two major approaches: one that takes the material objects as the starting point for investigation, and the other, the human subject or society as the starting point. A good deal is understood then about objects; however, less attention has been given to the practices of *making* an artifact and the act of manipulating materiality—that is, to the ways in which objects are conceptualized, produced, circulated, used, and exchanged. Along with Beth Fowkes Tobin, I have argued for more attention to the *making of things* in a series of four books on women and material culture. Artifacts are not passive, inert things; they are invested with meanings through association and usage; meanings change over time and place. They are part of social networks and interact in social networks. Carl Knappett makes a good point about placing objects in a web when he argues: “We should not treat objects as individual, isolated items; attention must be devoted to both their spatial and temporal situatedness. The former refers to the complex environment of human and non-human objects in which individual artifacts are enmeshed. The latter consists of an artifact’s location within the flow of time, and how that artifact is experienced by agents over the course of a life time” (62-3).

Things, in other words, have agency; they do not simply reflect meaning. Thus, yarn bombing can be understood as a social agent of change within social networks and the installation itself as having agency.

Bruno Latour has made a convincing case for the agency of objects (“Berlin Key”). In *Reassembling the Social*, Bruno Latour theorizes that the social involves complex networks of forces that must be better understood. His theory reinvests individuals with agency (something theories of the late 20th century erased in many disciplines) and more radically invests non-human objects—things—with agency as well (“Berlin Key”). Thus, “actors” in Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) are not just living beings (humans and animals) but doors, locks, planes, homes, belongings, and so on. He insists that these matter when we consider the webs or networks of interaction because they act on humans and other objects. He writes: “It’s the power exerted through entities that don’t sleep and associations that don’t break down that allow power to last longer and expand further—and, to achieve such a feat, many more materials than social compacts have to be devised” (*Reassembling* 70).

Since the social is “produced,” scholars need to examine the sites where *things* are produced and innovations occur. We need to connect this understanding with yarn bombing and contemporary activism.

The term “bombing” in “yarn bombing” comes from graffiti slang, where “to bomb” is “to paint many surfaces in an area” (Cooper and Chalfant 27) although Graffiti bombers often choose to paint throw-ups or tags because they can be rendered more quickly and the graffiti artists can evade the law (Whitford; McDonald).<sup>10</sup> Just as graffiti is an illegal practice, so is yarn bombing, also called not surprisingly “yarn graffiti,” among other terms. The connection with *graffiti* underscores the rhetoricity of yarn bombing as the word “graffiti” comes from the Greek term γράφειν—*graphein*—meaning “to write.” What does it mean to say graffiti is written? When the graffiti artist, who is credited with beginning the contemporary graffiti movement in Tehran, Iran, was asked about the meaning of graffiti, the self-named artist A1one (a.k.a. Tanhā<sup>11</sup>) said: “A drawing on the street is similar to a letter: It proves that there is a writer.” Graffiti

<sup>10</sup> The specific term “yarn bombing” was coined by Leanne Prain (a graphic artist, writer, knitter, and crafter) for her 2009 co-authored book with Mandy Moore titled *Yarn Bombing: The Art of Crochet and Knit Graffiti*. The practice is also known by other names such as yarn storming, yarn graffiti, urban crochet and knitting, and guerilla crochet and knitting. Of course, knitting has been used for various feminist activist projects but these terms of the art were yet in play. See, for example, Sabrina Shirobayashi; David Revere McFadden and Jennifer Scanlan.

<sup>11</sup> Tanhā is one of the Four Noble Truths of Buddha meaning “thirst” literally but defined as the craving to hold onto pleasurable and neutral experiences and to be separated from unpleasant ones.

confirms the presence and reality of the “maker” in a public space that is typically controlled by and reserved for those in power. Graffiti bears knowledge of the world; it expresses dynamically “thing knowledge.”

Like graffiti, yarn bombing without official permission or permit is illegal. Hence, many yarn bombers use pseudonyms to conceal their named identities. Because this activity takes place in “public spaces,” yarn bombing is understood as “defacing property.” Of course, yoking the phrases “public spaces” and “defacing property” is itself an oxymoron, blurring public and private worlds. This blurring is a hegemonic reading of graffiti. As graffiti artists have noted, “no one asks my permission to hang huge billboards in public spaces. Why should I ask permission to bomb sites?” (*Bomb It*). Where yarn bombing differs from graffiti is that yarn bombing does not damage surfaces; it is easily removed and leaves no mark.

Done in public spaces, yarn bombing lends itself to robust contemporary activism as well as aesthetic, charitable, artistic, and other foci. Over the last two decades, contemporary Western activism has taken a radical turn, moving beyond and in contradistinction to traditional rhetorical strategies of public protest and confrontation among throngs of gatherers. I call this turn “soft power.” This oxymoronic phrase for contemporary activism tactics challenges the connotation of “soft” as flimsy, weak, and stereotypically feminine and the connotation of “power” as brute force, strong, and stereotypically masculine. Both words are turned inside out in many current activist movements where soft is strong and power is nonaggressive. Soft is physical and power is cerebral. Soft is durable and power is creative.

On the leading edge are third-wave feminists who have helped to redefine activism in ways that are very different from former feminists (Gray). Unlike earlier feminist groups that used violent and disruptive strategies, some third-wave feminists use much more pliable strategies. As Stacey Sowards and Valerie Renegar point out, today feminist activism includes tactics such as “creating grassroots’ models of leadership, using strategic humor, building feminist identity, sharing stories, and resisting stereotypes and labels” (58). The contemporary practice of yarn bombing offers one instantiation of contemporary feminist protest tactics.

Of course, the use of “waves” is problematic because it suggests that feminists have ebbed and flowed throughout time while in reality there have always been feminists. I hesitated using the term “third-wave” precisely because of this problem. I resorted to it as a short-cut with a caveat. Furthermore, there has been criticism that claims there is not a third-wave because of “its failure to unite in large—scale political protest over issues of importance to women” (Pentney html). Some second-wave feminists dismiss the idea of a third-wave because there is not a strong group of women uniting and coalescing around shared beliefs and values. The fact of the matter is that from the beginning and through all the so-called waves, women have not been united in unified beliefs and values; women are and always have been a diverse gendered amalgamation.

Furthermore, while it is tempting to connect yarn bombing with “girlie feminism,” a term coined by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards in their *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* to describe the pro-femininity line of young feminists (136; also see their rev. ed.), it is too simple a view. As a strand of third-wave feminism that seeks to recoup and endorse traditional female activities by “valuing knitting, cooking and dressing up” (Baumgardner and Richards 216), “girlie feminists” are not the first nor the only amalgamation to reclaim and rewrite the feminine, while challenging its stereotypical and hegemonic characterizations. Rozsika Parker, for example, in speaking about embroidery and femininity for early 20th-century British feminists says: “embroidery was employed not to transform the place and function of art, but to change ideas about women and femininity. Far from desiring to disentangle embroidery and femininity, they wanted embroidery to evoke femininity—but femininity represented as a source of strength, not as evidence of women’s weakness” (197).

There were a number of early feminists that sought to redefine the “feminine” and not all shared the same view.

Second-wave feminists, however, are largely remembered for rejecting anything that was constructed as feminine. As Beth Ann Pentney notes, “If second-wave feminists have been historicized as women who put down their knitting, third-wave feminists may be characterized as those who have picked it back up again” (Pentney). Jack Z. Bratich and Heidi M. Brush refer to this resurgence of interest—“a whole range of practices usually defined as the ‘domestic arts’: knitting, crocheting, scrapbooking, quilting, embroidery, sewing, doll-making” (234)—especially among young women, as “fabriculture.” But, again, this is rather simplistic; for, while many second-wave feminists voiced their disdain for all feminine practices, there are those who privately engaged in such practices, such as rhetoric and composition scholar Sharon Crowley, who has collected dolls all her life, and composition scholar Susan Miller, who completed many embroidery projects. But what most third-wave feminists share, even those of contradictory strands, is a political stance and set of practices that are much gentler than the “chain yourself to the fence” or “kick the door” down strands of some first- and second-wave feminists. This softer tactic is evident in what some yarn bombers say about the act. For instance, Deadly Knitshade (a pseudonym for a yarn bomber in London) says: “Change and making the world a better place can be done with a grin instead of a grimace, a whisper instead of a bellow. What we do *can* alter the way people look at their world. How it [yarn storming] alters it is up to them. That’s really our point” (124).

It perhaps isn’t surprising that Deadly Knitshade coined the term “yarn storming” to deflect the association of the term “bombing” with war and violent tactics.

So how are women and men attempting to alter political and social practices and perspectives? How do their activist activities construct social identities? What does their practice of *making things* help us understand? We turn now to protest yarn bombing as acts of civil disobedience—a global practice for making subversive statements about political issues. The following sections offer brief case studies of activism in yarn concerning: war, political decisions, economic problems, and environmental sustainability.

### Protest against War

In April 2006, Danish artist Marianne Jorgensen created a yarn bombing war protest against the US, British, and Danish involvement in the Iraqi war, covering in yarn a World War II tank that she borrowed after much negotiating with the Danish government. Titled **Pink M.24 Chaffee Tank**, the installation was made up of more than 4,000 15 X 15 cm pink crocheted and knitted squares donated by more than one thousand contributors from the United States and European countries that were then assembled together and fit over the borrowed WWII combat tank. (See Figure 1.)

These squares of various crochet and knitted patterns “represent a common acknowledgement of a resistance to the war in Iraq” (“Pink”). Catherine Mazza notes that “When pieced together from numerous individual contributions, as many knitted protest projects are, the works become a sort of handcrafted petition” (qtd. in Gohil). Unlike a written petition, however, on which one signs one’s name in seconds, the making of squares takes time and commitment and labor. As Betsy Greer says of another yarn bombing installation, “It’s easy to ignore a petition, but not so easy to ignore a massive sea of blue squares that blocks your path and leads you to wonder what its purpose is” (*Knitting* 109). Likewise, here it is hard to ignore a soft, pink draped war tank.





Figure 1: "Pink M.24 Chaffee Tank". Copyright permission granted by Marianne Jorgenson.

The piece was displayed between April 7th and 11th in 2006 in front of the Nikolaj Contemporary Art Center in Copenhagen. Ele Carpenter points out about this protest,

This symbolic transformation of military hardware into an object of comic irony seeks to disarm the offensive stance of a machine justified by its defensive capability. Whilst the sinister Trojan undertones of disguising a real weapon as soft and fluffy lead us to review the deaths from 'friendly' fire, as well as the women and children who suffer the largest percentage of deaths in most conflicts. Activist craft has many forms of symbolism and disguise. ... [M]ost importantly the *Pink M.24 Chaffee* enables, or should enable, an alternative critical discourse about global militarism. (Carpenter)

Carpenter's point echoes Deadly Knitshade. Public spaces and the authority that typically regulates them are subverted and transformed when filled with color, difference, and domestic work (Sheppard).

On these markers, feminist Beth Ann Pentney rightly points out that:

Combining what Jørgensen refers to as the symbolic 'home, care, closeness' [and, I would add, 'the traditionally feminine'] with the violence and trauma caused by war machines forces the viewer to reconsider the perceived ordinariness or inevitability of war. The ideological affiliation of knitting with the feminine is exploited rather than rejected by Jørgensen in this demonstration, to such a degree that the cultural meanings imbued in the color pink—femininity, a lack of authority, and nostalgic ties to the domestic—are used to destabilize the tank's symbolic power. (Pentney)

The inverted sense of "soft power" is clear here. Power is, as Pentney notes, "destabilize[ed]" and soft takes on a new sense of strong.

### Protest against Political Decision

Yarn bombers challenge various political decisions. In April 2011, thousands of German citizens held an anti-nuclear protest demanding the end of nuclear power. In Essen, Germany, about 3,000 people participated in the nationwide anti-nuclear demonstration.



Figure 2: Anti-Nuclear Protest stitched by Strick and Liesel near Essen, Germany. Photographer anonymous.

As part of that protest, two young German university students who call themselves by the pseudonyms Strick and Liesel (named after “Strickliesel” or “Knitting Nancy,” a toy that teaches children how to knit) conducted a yarn bombing (C.G.).

At the top of the yarn installation is the familiar nuclear activity logo used on warning signs, especially near reactors or nuclear facilities in the branded yellow and black. On the bottom, the symbol is repeated in white and black. The middle “Danke” or “No thanks,” a phrase that is part of the logo of the large international Anti-Nuclear Movement. The two young women made numerous copies of this piece and hung the banners of this design on trees, street lamps, bridge banisters, and the pillars in front of the state parliament building around Dusseldorf, Duisburg, and Essen near where the banner pictured here was hung. The ironic twist of juxtaposing the nuclear symbol and the phrase “no thanks” makes the message serve as an invention device to get people thinking and perhaps caring about the dangers of nuclear power. But what draws their attention first is the disjuncture between the domestic yarn and the untamed tree bark.

### Protest against Economic Problems

In June 2012, in Los Feliz, California, outside the Bank of America, on 1715 North Vermont Ave, in Los Angeles, USA, the KnitRiot Collective (a group of US guerrilla knitters and crafters) hung 99 hand-knitted houses among the ficus trees to protest the foreclosure crises (“Los Feliz”).

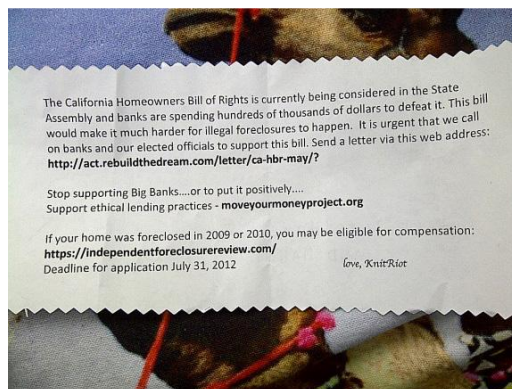


Figure 3: HomeSWEETHome Yarn Bombing Protest of Home Foreclosures. Photograph courtesy KnitRiot Collective



**Figure 4:** Close-up of HomeSWEETHome Yarn Bombing Protest of Home Foreclosures. Photograph courtesy KnitRiot Collective.

Ironically titled HOME sweet HOME, this yarn storming was intended to demonstrate solidarity among Americans who have lost or are losing their homes to foreclosures. Hanging domesticated yarn houses along a clothes line with clothes pins—both symbols of home—calls attention to the devastation of the home foreclosure problem during the economic collapse of 2009 onward. The clothes pins hold the houses on the line as if *driving home* the point that homes like clothing are necessary shelters—something the flurry of home foreclosures, short sales, and home abandonments impeded and, in some cases, prohibited. These problems, largely caused by inappropriate and shady mortgage practices, are all more distressing because they could have been avoided except for power and greed.



**Figure 5:** Tag on backside of knitted home. Photograph courtesy KnitRiot Collective.

On the back of the knitted houses, KnitRiot attached a tag urging viewers to call on banks and elected representatives in the State Assembly to vote in favor of the California Homeowners Bill of Rights, a bill to curtail illegal foreclosures. Calling on viewers to stop supporting “Big Banks” in favor of “ethical lending practices” of other, perhaps smaller, banks, the tag offered information on how to apply for compensation after a foreclosure. Each point was highlighted with a viable web address. The California Homeowners Bill of Rights passed and became law in January 2013.<sup>12</sup> The political identity and position of this knitting group is clear in both the visual rhetoric and the written rhetoric on their installation.

The KnitRiot Collective is quite active around Los Angeles and Hollywood, conducting economic protests and doing service for the homeless. For instance, in December 2011, they yarn bombed the PATH Homeless center in East Hollywood, leaving a wall of knitted hats and scarves for the homeless to take as protection against the cold (Boone). On their blog, KnitRiot members reported, “The warm fuzzy pieces went up in the dim morning light Saturday December 17<sup>th</sup>, and by 9 am hats and scarfs, hand knitted with love, could be seen being worn on the streets around the Mall (KnitRiot).”

Warmth, protection, and shelter mark the KnitRiot protests and acts of kindness; these also connect them to diverse peoples and construct their identities as caring individuals.

### **Protest for Environmental Sustainability**

The last protest concerns environmental sustainability, specifically against logging.

<sup>12</sup> For more information on this bill, see “California Homeowner Bill of Rights.” *State of California Department of Justice* at <http://oag.ca.gov/hbor>.



**Figure 6:** Protest Against Logging, 2012. Courtesy of Art Works for Wild Spaces. Profile photo on Facebook. Photographer unknown.

On February 16, 2012, a stretch of Highway 774 near Pincher Creek in Alberta, Canada, was yarn bombed by a group protesting the practice of logging that was taking place just 4 kilometers south of the highway. Yarn bombers targeted trees so that those who passed by would “pause to reflect on the ‘knitting together’ of people, their communities, and the beauty in the space that surrounds them” (“Castle”). A spokesperson for the group described the installation as “creating a voice for wild spaces” (“Castle”). The knitted afghan on each tree works as a metaphor supplying warmth, nurturing, and protection against the devastation of logging while at the same time shouts a message “do not touch me.” The pun of “knitting ‘knits’ folks together” has a long history and that concept is certainly evoked by the colorful “protected” trees in the “wild” covered with a docile knitted afghan.

There is a sense of the domestic in all of these yarn bombings that conjure up notions of warmth, caring, nurturing, and other connotations—no matter how distorted the connotations may be for some people’s domestic experiences: “the phenomenology of the practice—frustration with completion, undoing an almost finished product numerous times, sometimes leaving it unfinished altogether” (257, note 21).

### Ephemeral Strength

Feminists Betsey Greer and Debbie Stoller (founder of *Bust* magazine and author of *Stitch ‘n Bitch* series of knitting books) separately argue that the resurgence of interest in “fabriculture,” specifically knitting and crocheting among third-wave feminists, comes from an epistemic perspective that values *making over made*, production over consumerism, and process over product. It is the relationship to the process that is crucial in yarn graffiti not the final product (*Knitting; Stitch ‘n Bitch* series). Moreover, it is the process of *making* that helps to construct social identity. As Bratich and Brush note, crafters often call attention to: “the phenomenology of the practice—frustration with completion, undoing an almost finished product numerous times, sometimes leaving it unfinished altogether” (257, note 21).

Yarn bombing fits this paradigm because it is an ephemeral, transient art and the yarn installation is temporal—an impermanent rather than permanent art object. While yarn installations may last for years—though the yarn will eventually disintegrate from harsh weather conditions—yarn bombings are considered non-permanent, and, unlike other forms of graffiti, can be (and often are) easily removed if necessary. On Flickr, for example, self-described yarn bombers were asked “How long do your yarn bombs last?” Over a dozen answered. All agreed that length of depends on the location and on the design. One reported, “I had one last less than 24 hours,” another wrote “we’ve got some that stay up until the weather kills them; others disappear much sooner for reasons unknown.” Still another observed: “Really depends on so many things. The shortest I’ve had was less than half an hour and another I’ve had up for over a



year” (“How Long”). So who pilfers these pieces? Yarn installations are often taken down by the police who see them as vandalism, by some of the public who see them as a nuisance, or even by those who see the whimsy of them, understand the message, and appreciate the art but take them precisely because of those reasons.

Given that it is unclear how long a piece will remain on site, yarn bombers are clearly more invested in the *process of creating* an installation than in the finished product itself. That is, it is the *performance* of yarn bombing that creates the meaning rather than the thing itself and that contributes self-definition as part of identity formation.

Valuing the doing over the done *and* the self-made over the mass made is to claim the laboring practices of crafting and the slow process practices as a reaction to staggering rate of technological change today, what Colin Bain calls “hyperculture.” Paradoxically, however, it is this speedy race of communication technology that has permitted yarn bombing to spread so quickly across the globe. Indeed, the internet has been absolutely vital to circulating and sharing yarn bombing strategies through viral videos, blogs, and social networks. Joann Matvichuk, who founded International Yarn Bombing Day in 2011, was surprised at the vast reach of this practice. In her blog on June 11, 2011, she wrote as “Purl Girls”: “I had no idea when I came up with the idea for International Yarnbombing Day that it would have gotten this big. I figured a few hundred Canadians and Americans would be participating but I had no idea that I would have people from all over the World including countries like Iceland, Norway, Egypt, Israel, Germany and Australia” (Purl Girls).

Just about every continent has participated in this global community activity. In the words of one reporter, “This global reach is one reason why some yarn-bombers believe their work has the potential to make political statements” (“Yarn-bombing”). Crossing physical borders via the internet, yarn bombers can find those who share similar views and positions even when the politics of their individual countries and their personal beliefs are very different. Not all yarn bombers, of course, are the same or share the same views or politics or any political identity marker. Indeed, all activists do not share the same views even when they share in craftivism. For instance, MK Carroll created a knitted womb pattern that inspired the “Wombs on Washington” project. After her free pattern appeared in the online magazine *Knitty* in 2004 (Carroll), an online community called Knit4Choice formed and called on others to use the pattern to create knitted wombs to be left on the steps to the Supreme Court to protest attempts to restrict abortion laws and undermine the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973. Since then, more knitting and crochet patterns for making wombs have been made available on the web and more calls to mail them to politicians have been made. (See Figure 7.) One humorous, though deadly serious, site is Gratuitous Uterus, from where the picture in Figure 7 comes (“How to Get”). The movement was not without its deflectors.



**Figure 7:** Sample Crocheted Uterus with Smiley Face. Courtesy of Gratuitous Uterus Pictures. Photography unknown.



This protest project raised lots of questions about representation of diverse women who do not fall into a binary: those who are pro-choice but don't share all the same views as those expressed by those who called for the knitted wombs or those who are pro-life but share neither the views of pro-choice nor those of their own group. What is important, though, about this project and other yarn bombing projects is that it opened up dialogue among many who shared different views from one end of the spectrum to the other. As it raised questions about representation of women that don't paint them all the same, it raised questions about identity formation.

## Conclusions

Throughout the globe, yarn graffiti activists juxtapose the softness of yarn against the hardness of the issues to which it is put to use and the sterility of the spaces on which it is installed—the beauty of the colors and design against the ugliness of the detestable issues at hand. As one guerilla knitter puts it, “this style of folk craft renovation is... integral to altering and beautifying ugly aspects of urban architecture” (Danica).

Yarn Bombing (re)presents the convergence of several contemporary political and cultural strands: third-wave feminists, craft activists, Do-It-Yourselfers, and contemporary artists. By engaging in practices that have been gendered in the past, yarn bombers (men and women) seek to reclaim, redefine, and repurpose these “traditionally feminized” activities. Greer has termed this political strategy craftivism. In speaking about craftivism (also called knitivism, artivism, and so on), Betsy Greer argues that “craftivism is about more than ‘craft’ and ‘activism’—it’s about making your own creativity a force to be reckoned with. The moment you start thinking about your creative production as more than just a hobby or ‘women’s work,’ and instead as something that has cultural, historical and social value, craft becomes something stronger than a fad or trend (“Craftivism in Three,” see also “Craftivism” and “What is Craftivism”).

Craftwork as described by Greer is formidable and compelling. In this way, her description draws attention to the term “craft” in German—*kraft*—which means “power.” Power in this space does not signal hierarchy, domination, or hegemony, rather it is more like a force, strength, and ability. It returns us to the phrase “soft power”—a creative, innovative, and compelling force that resides in the *doing* of the craftwork. Understood in this way, craftwork in general and yarn bombing in particular resonates with Gaunlett’s research on the intersections between creativity and identity.

Yarn bombing can also be connected to what Joanne Hollows calls a Folk feminism where “‘authentic’ feminine cultural forms and practices are privileged over commercially produced popular culture and an attempt is made to unearth a women’s cultural tradition which has been hidden, marginalized or trivialized by a masculine cultural tradition and/or an inauthentic women’s culture” (29).

In terms of the Do-it-yourself movement (DIY), Dennis Stevens points out: “If there is anything cohesive about the DIY movement, it’s that its practitioners choose to *reinvent tradition as a remix*, engaging with it through parody, satire and nostalgic irony... [T]his work makes its cultural [and I’d add political] statements indirectly and quietly” (emphasis added) (Stevens 89-90).

Yarn bombing certainly reinvents traditional yarn work that had been for making domestic items and personal clothing. Yarn storming also repurposes yarn to new ends. In Ele Carpenter’s words: “Using the hacker language of reverse-engineering [or I’d term it repurposing] as a learning process—taking apart your jumper or video player to learn how to fix or reuse it” is the sign of DYI and in this case yarn storming, bombing, and graffiti.”

Drawing these strands together, we can understand yarn bombing as a contemporary response to a long history of changes: the separation of labor and domestic skills, the split of public and private, the legal restrictions on making and mending anything, and restrictions on displaying anything in public. This practice calls for creativity rather than destruction of the used. Yarn bombing is an invention device, one

that attracts attention to the strangely familiar of home, nurturing, protecting, and sheltering in a strangely unfamiliar place.

Finally, the practice of yarn bombing challenges many assumptions about arts and crafts, (i.e., high and low arts), male and female practices, handmade and mass made, hand wrought and machine wrought, hierarchical arrangements of superior and subordinate, official and unofficial, public and private spaces, and personal and political. By using domesticated practices to call attention to public problems, yarn bombers build a social identity of personal, private, public, social identity. Bring forward the yarn!

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# Recognition, Identity and Citizenship after the End of History

**Abstract:** One of the most fundamental needs of all human beings is the need for recognition. This need for recognition can only be met if a society is structured in such a way to provide support, acknowledgement, and positive imagery for groups and individuals to use in the production of identity. In normative terms, recognition is a key aspect of critical social theory because it provides a standard by which we can assess an individual's perception of the social treatment they receive. The institutions and social arrangements which allow the full and free development of identity are, from this point of reference, more acceptable than those which do not. In a post-traditional world, recognition is a human need, a social good, and a point of reference that can be used to compare the validity of social arrangements. In this paper, the cultural and legal assumption that rights and citizenship are based on the Enlightenment's conception of universal human equality is contrasted with the demand for recognition from particular groups based on specific characteristics or unique experiences of oppression.

**Keywords:** identity, recognition, social theory, rights, citizenship

**Motto:** "Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need" (Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*).

**Motto :**"The point of recognition is not to eliminate the other, but to count for something in the eyes of the other, to be acknowledged and respected by the other" (Robert R. Williams, *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other*).

**Motto:** "The striking worker does not carry a sign saying, 'I am a greedy person and want all the money I can extract from management.' Rather, the striker says (and thinks to himself): 'I am a good worker; I am worth much more to my employer than I am currently being paid'" (Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*).

## Introduction

Recognition is the conceptual link that makes it possible to theorize the relationship between specific types of injustice. Demands for cultural, economic, and social justice are all species of demands for recognition. Struggles for recognition ensue when self-understandings of particular groups are not reflected in the economic, cultural or political institutions of their society. For example, struggles against cultural imperialism, wherein the universalization of a dominant group's or nation's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm make it difficult, if not impossible, to create and maintain an identity, are, inter alia, struggles for recognition. W. E. B. DuBois described the subjective experience of misrecognition as, "the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (16).

G.W.F. Hegel was one of the first to articulate the philosophical importance of recognition. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel based his theory of social interaction and social transformation on the



insight that every person desires the desire of others. We all need recognition and acknowledgment in order to develop a secure identity and to feel at home in our social environment. Hegel also argued that people do not want recognition from inferiors, nor do they want recognition if it is not genuine, or if it is produced by force. In Hegel's thought, an individual's need for recognition is the catalyst for social transformation. Recognition is the basis of Hegel's concept of *Geist*, social spirit, or culture; an "I that is a We and a We that is an I" (110). *Geist* originates in and is developed through the intersubjective struggle for recognition and is a social, rather than metaphysical or theological concept.

Contemporary thinkers have built on Hegel's insight, claiming that reciprocal, equal, recognition is a prerequisite for social justice and solidarity (Habermas, 1973, 1990; Honneth, 1995; Taylor, 1992, 1994). Their work suggests that recognition should have the status of a social need. As such, recognition is a normative ideal for measuring the degree of justice in social interaction. Forms of interaction and institutions that deny recognition or misrecognize individuals can be criticized from this normative point of view.

### Analysis

Using recognition in an analytical fashion allows insight into two fundamental problems of social theory; social action and social order. It also helps us understand and clarify the normative status of social action when it is viewed as a continual struggle for recognition.

Recognition is an explanatory device that shows us how social conflict unfolds. It is also a critical concept insofar as it allows us to criticize social arrangements that do not allow for acknowledgement and development of our identities.

The Canadian social philosopher Charles Taylor has turned his attention to the politics of recognition because of his concern with the price that individuals have to pay for freedom in post-traditional societies. He claims that the decline of traditional anchors for identity has created a permanent identity crisis in which the need for authenticity remains unsatisfied. Taylor argues for a theory of identity in which recognition from others allows us to become fully human, fully authentic, and fully self-actualizing in a post-traditional world that lacks taken-for-granted structures of meaning and value. Equal recognition is not just the appropriate mode for a healthy democratic society; its refusal can inflict damage on those who are denied it.

In an influential essay, *Multiculturalism and The Politics of Recognition*, Taylor draws out the implications of his intersubjective theory of identity for the analysis of social and political institutions. However, Taylor's major contribution is the philosophical anthropology that forms the basis of his social and political thought. His understanding of the self as necessarily dependent on recognition from equals reorients social theory, moving it away from instrumentalist and rational-actor theories of the person as a strategic resource optimizer toward a better understanding of the affective and moral dimensions of social and political action.

Max Horkheimer specified three criteria that a critical theory of society must meet. It must be explanatory, it must be practical, and it must be normative (244). That is, it must explain social problems, specify an agent of change or transformation, and provide some normative criteria by which social transformation can be measured. The concept of recognition meets these requirements. Recognition allows us to explain social problems from the perspective of social actors because it serves as a 'marker' for a perceived deficits or shortcomings in social interaction. Recognition can refer to many types of injustice because, although recognition itself is social need, specific forms of recognition differ, depending on the circumstances.

A struggle for recognition begins when a spokesperson for a group says, "What we want is X" or, when someone claims, "you don't understand me, my culture, or my point of view." Empirical examples present themselves daily. They are more urgent for the claimants, less urgent for the theorist. As theorists, we

cannot inform those engaged in struggles for recognition, offer strategic advice, or prove that they are going about it the wrong way. Rather, it is the other way around. Only those engaged in actual struggles for recognition can inform the theorists.

However, the generality of the concept of recognition creates some problems. First, problems of judgment arise. Demands for recognition come from a broad array of groups, for every conceivable reason, and are often based on questionable accounts of history and tradition. Whose rights, identities, and culture should be recognized? How should all affected parties respond to demands for recognition? Why should they have to? What is the weight of historical precedent or tradition in particular cases of misrecognition, especially when history has been a history of exclusion? How are we to determine when it is valid to claim that a person, group or society's practices are destructive because they deny or distort the self-understanding of others? What practical measures, such as resource allocation, territorial identity claims, hiring preferences, exemption from hunting and fishing regulations, domestic partnership benefits, exclusive forms of political representation, and so forth, would be necessary for appropriate recognition? How can we keep from sliding into a soft relativism wherein all claims to recognition are equally relevant and therefore equally meaningless?

There are also problems of application, since there are a number of ways to grant recognition. Responses to struggles for recognition can consist in giving particular victims what was denied them or making reparations for wrongs suffered. Responses to recognition can also be group-oriented. One example is affirmative action, which involves recognizing members of an entire group as deserving special consideration, regardless of whether each individual person in the group has a legitimate grievance. Deciding how to recognize groups or individuals is often controversial. It is controversial because a decision about who is a legitimate victim or who is deserving of scarce resources, is never made without a fight.

At this point, it is useful to ask why it is necessary to revive Hegel's concept of recognition when prevailing discussions of identity politics seem to cover much of the same conceptual ground. Identity politics are movements for recognition and social transformation. Identity politics are driven by the demand that a group, lifestyle, or practice common to a group be acknowledged and recognized.

However, there are some important distinctions between identity politics and the politics of recognition. First, identity politics have become closely associated with issues of lifestyle, which are commodified and framed as personal choices. This understanding of the idea that the personal is political is closely associated with an ethos of consumerism rather than conflict and transformation. A politics of recognition does not entirely avoid issues of lifestyle. However, the emphasis on intersubjective struggle and transformation does prevent broader political interests and goals from being co-opted and framed solely in terms of individual consumer choices. By defining problems of identity as struggles for recognition, rather than relying on a conception of identity that is reduced to an effect of the market, we can avoid reducing the creation of identity to shopping for the right lifestyle. Second, the concept of the subject and of agency in much writing about identity politics is increasingly simplistic and empty from a normative standpoint.

For example, those who approach identity from a perspective influenced by Michel Foucault stray into a minefield of problems. Although Foucault's genealogies help us understand that the real basis of the subject is the ostensibly groundless operation of discursive constellations of power-knowledge regimes, he was unwilling to articulate and defend a normative position from which an emancipatory politics could appeal in claiming that forms domination and methods of resistance are in any way different. For Foucault, both domination and resistance involve the use of power, but neither points the way toward freedom. Foucault's understanding of power as a boundless, constitutive force, which operates with or without legitimacy, makes it difficult to specify a goal or standard to which political practice can appeal. Without some notion of right and legitimacy that is not merely an instrument of power, Foucault's understanding of resistance ceases to have any normative import. Without some conception of what legitimate balances

of power between people might look like, the Foucaultian social critic can only encourage resistance and lifestyle experimentation as responses to injustice. While these are laudable goals, in the end they are still individualistic and easily susceptible to co-optation. Moreover, a Foucaultian conception of resistance is compatible with some of the more malignant forms of contemporary lifestyle politics and with the ethos of groups practicing politics of hate and exclusion. Individuals and groups like this are usually able to convince themselves that they are the real victims and that their hatred of immigrants, people of color, and gays is a form of resistance to the power that others wield over them.

A theory of recognition, in contrast, privileges the intersubjective, transformative, and cooperative aspects of social struggles in a way that prevents the outcome from being one-sided and reactionary. A theory of recognition places issues of equality and justice at the forefront, thus dealing differently with the issue of power. Although power imbalances do characterize most interactions, a theory of recognition does not understand unbalanced power relationships as a typical and indeed constitutive source of social relations, *pace Foucault*, but as distortions in social relationships, which can be mitigated, but probably not entirely eliminated.

Third, Foucaultian approaches to identity politics can and do show us how identities are the outcome of cultural hegemony, sexism and racism, techno-political discourses, and the colonization of the life-world by the market. However, they do not offer any grounds for criticizing these processes of subjection other than implicit claims of harm that apply to the most obvious cases. In cases of outright discrimination or the deprivations of 'soft torture' carried out in our punitive institutions, it would not be difficult to persuade a group of taxpayers and voters that these practices are harmful and should be ended. However, in more nebulous cases, where the harm is less blatant and more remote from the experience of most citizens, the Foucaultian approach falters. If, for example, we are going to make the claim that forcing non-Anglo children to speak English causes harm or that joking about gays and lesbians has psychologically harmful effects, then it may be necessary to explain what we mean when we speak of harm and to articulate how our claims can be defended philosophically, practically, and politically. If there is no standard that will provide a working definition of harm, then one person's harm is another's minor irritation. Seyla Benhabib distills these points nicely in her discussion of a similar disagreement in feminist theory.

The normative demands upon the individual of race, gender, and class identities as well as of other self-constitutive dimensions may be conflictual, in fact, they may be irreconcilable. Unless feminist theory is able to develop a concept of normative agency robust enough to say something significant vis-a-vis such clashes, and which principles individuals should adopt to choose among them, it loses its theoretical bite and becomes a mindless empiricist celebration of all pluralities. (46)

The final reason for moving away from the term identity politics is that it is too closely associated with new and supposedly different social movements. However, the politics of identity is not new. The 19th century women's movements, movements for the emancipation of slaves, and anti-colonial struggles have all been struggles for the recognition of suppressed identity-claims, as well as for economic equality, political liberty, and the right to self-determination.

Up to this point, I have attempted to bring together two general problems with the use of recognition as a critical standard for critical social theory. First, the concept of recognition is plagued by indeterminate meaning. This leads to a condition bordering on conceptual anarchy. Second, there is the unsettled debate about the most appropriate political, social, and economic arrangements for satisfying demands for recognition.

In order to bring these problems into sharper relief, I want to briefly review and critique one of the most notorious and influential attempts to pair Hegel's theory of recognition with a particular political solution. I refer to the argument in Francis Fukuyama's article "The End of History?" which he expanded into the book, *The End of History and the Last Man*. This brief exposition intends to suggest that

Fukuyama's defense of the liberal capitalist state is incompatible with his point of departure—Hegel's theory of recognition. I want to show how incompatible Fukuyama's fusion of recognition and 'liberal capitalism' is with the goal of building an argument for the compatibility of recognition and a more radical version of social democracy.

In the summer of 1989, Francis Fukuyama published an article titled, "The End of History?". Then, in 1992, he published a book based on that article titled, "The End of History and The Last Man." What was most striking about these treatises was Fukuyama's use of a strange and contradictory mixture of Hegel's philosophical anthropology, Nietzsche's critique of egalitarianism, and some remarks on the nature of desire inspired by Plato. Fukuyama put this concatenation to use as a philosophical justification of the triumph of American style capitalist democracies. Fukuyama used Alexander Kojève's existential interpretation of Hegel as the basis of his theory of human nature. Fukuyama argued that Kojève's interpretation of Hegel explains the inexorable march of history toward liberal capitalism. Fukuyama then added a dash of Plato, in his use of the term, *Thymos*, meant to signify striving or desiring. According to Fukuyama, the thymotic aspect of human nature is what drives us in our struggles for recognition.

However, Fukuyama uses *Thymos* in another sense as well, to describe different character types, as in the "isothymotic and megalothymotic" character types (17). The so-called megalothymotic character type possesses a high level of drive and ambition. Not surprisingly, the isothymotic character type possesses less drive, but exhibits a stronger social conscience and a propensity for equality. Drive and ambition on the one hand and social conscience and equality on the other are turned into opposites in Fukuyama's formulation. The isothymotic character type, who possesses the desire for equality, provides a counterbalance to the megalothymotic who is only concerned with self-aggrandizement.

Fukuyama concluded with a discussion of the idea of the last man from Nietzsche. The problem with the expansion of the welfare state or any movement toward social democracy is that it could turn us all into complacent last men, couch potatoes who are content to collect our pay and benefits and do little else. For Fukuyama, it is the entrepreneur, rather than Nietzsche's *übermensch*, who acts as the bulwark against the complacency created by egalitarian political and social programs. It is important then, for the survival of the species and the culture that allows us to flourish, to pare down the welfare state, freeing up the creative energy of the entrepreneurs who will prevent the last man malaise from spreading any further. Altogether, Fukuyama's creative interpretive endeavors add up to a philosophical anthropology culled from various sources that 'explains' the triumph of liberal capitalism and justified the evisceration of the social welfare state.

Turning to the specific issue of recognition, Fukuyama claims that the "struggle for recognition" is the "central problem of politics" (xxi). According to Fukuyama's reading of Kojève's interpretation of Hegel, the contradictions in history that result from the human struggle for recognition are threefold: (1) the existence of different historical manifestations of the dialectic of Master and Slave, including proletarians and capitalists; (2) the contradiction between humans and nature created by technological development; and (3) the contradiction between universal declarations of human rights and their partial realization in many parts of the globe, including Western-style liberal capitalist democracies. However, after the collapse of communism as a viable sociopolitical system, history has effectively ended. Although contradictions remain between one human and another, between humans and nature, and between humans and an imperfect distribution of rights, there are no contradictions in world history or geopolitics that cannot be resolved within the structure of the liberal capitalist state itself.<sup>13</sup> The liberal capitalist state is the form of association where all remaining contradictions will eventually be resolved while avoiding a descent into the economic, cultural, and political lethargy of socialism and the last man malaise.

<sup>13</sup> The rise of highly organized, well-supported, populist, explicitly anti-western and anti-democratic Islamic revolutionary movements renders Fukuyama's thesis improbable in practical terms, and death tolls.

According to Fukuyama, in the liberal capitalist state all citizens are, in principle if not in practice, recognized as equals by the political system and the market. The principle underlying this equal recognition is the principle of universal humanity espoused in the Enlightenment political thought and free market ideals. These principles and ideals cannot be dramatically improved upon. What remains to be accomplished is the global dissemination of these political and economic forms, as well as the continued extension of rights and opportunities to all people in places where these forms are operative, such as the United States. According to Fukuyama, the liberal state is the best we can do, but its potential is not yet fully realized because liberalism, American style, has not spread completely throughout the world. Of course, social contradictions such as racism, sexism, and class-based inequalities still exist. However, according to Fukuyama, these are not products of the current system but residues of past, imperfect forms of political and economic life: "In a nutshell, the world has reached the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government" (2).

Fukuyama also argued that the only desirable form of recognition is recognition of humans as a generic category. For Fukuyama, recognition must proceed according to "the only mutually acceptable basis possible, that is, based on the individual's identity as a human being" (201). Fukuyama flatly denied the possibility of recognition of groups or individuals in any other terms, e.g., race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. He claimed these forms of recognition are defective because of their particularity, which always leads to divisiveness. The mechanism for recognizing people as universal human equals is citizenship, the legally recognized civil rights granted to the individual by the state. The system of rights guarantees reciprocal recognition because the state recognizes all citizens equally, as bearers of rights, and the citizens recognize the state by abiding by its laws (203).

The liberal state itself is rational because it allows for recognition within a self-consciously chosen political order. Fukuyama claimed that the American republic was "... the result of a public debate in which citizens of the state agree amongst one another on the explicit terms under which they will live together" (202). He cites the constitutional convention of 1787 as an exemplar of this public debate. We should be immediately suspicious of this example, and of the more general point that a very non-representative body of men arguing to secure their own property rights over two hundred years ago is equivalent to a "public debate... [about the] ...explicit terms under which they [we] will live together..." (Fukuyama 202). Bertell Ollman reminds us:

Most Americans know that the framers met for three months in closed session, but this is generally forgiven on the grounds that the then Congress of the United States had not commissioned them to write a new constitution and neither revolutionaries nor the counterrevolutionaries can do all their work in the open. What few modern day Americans realize, however, is that the framers did their best to ensure that we would never know the details of their deliberations. All the participants in the convention were sworn to life-long secrecy and when the debates were over, those who had taken notes were asked to hand them in to George Washington, whose final task as chairman of the convention was to get rid of the evidence. America's first president, it appears, was also its first shredder. (102)

Aside from Fukuyama's interpretation of the process of political will formation that led to the creation of the United States Constitution, there are a number of serious problems raised by his basic claims about recognition. I will focus on one of these problems. When Fukuyama describes the liberal capitalist state, the United States is his exemplar. The constitution of this state, publicly justified in 1787 and periodically amended, is supposedly neutral about the type of citizens it recognizes. The 18<sup>th</sup> century conception of citizenship was founded on the practical exclusion of the property-less, women, and African-Americans, how can we be so certain it is based on a universal conception of humanity?



Fukuyama needs a conception of recognition that can account for and alleviate these types of structurally generated inequalities and a political process that can undo the naturalized, *a priori* misrecognition of disadvantaged groups. Rather than rely on an ostensibly neutral conception of citizenship, it is necessary to recognize that all citizens are not yet equal, while using some conception of fairness and equality as a standard or goal. The problem of recognition is double-edged. We need a tacit standard, guideline, or regulative ideal for measuring the justness of forms of recognition, including citizenship. However, this standard cannot be the ostensibly universal conception we currently have because this standard penalizes non-white, non-male, and non-property owners for being what they are and offers them the opportunity to become what they do not necessarily want to be. Fukuyama's response to alleviating existing contradictions within the liberal, capitalist, state is to deregulate the market and allow more freedom for each to pursue her divergent entrepreneurial projects. This substitution of economics for politics is unsatisfactory. We must have a way to make claims about what each owes to the other, and what each is thus owed, that is not reducible to the current system of rights or relegated to the functioning of the market and its tendency to commodify individual and group identities.

The competing demands for rethinking the standards of equality qua citizenship and demands for the recognition of difference are difficult to untangle. For now, suffice it to say that social inequality and social differences are resilient facts, while the system of rights in modern constitutions and our concomitant understanding of citizenship are historical artifacts that can be modified. Citizenship is an evolving marker for legal personhood as it is historically transformed and refined. In Hegelian terms, that which we currently call identity, personhood, and citizenship should be understood as a particular moment in a gradual movement toward increasingly reflective notions of what is universal and what is particular, what is a person and who or what is a bearer of rights. Current claims to ecological rights and the right to be protected from pollution, discussions of animal rights, claims to territorial sovereignty made by indigenous peoples and historically marginalized nomads, the development of transnational associations and transnational identities, and the blurring of the boundaries between humans and machines are already forcing us to rethink identity, citizenship, rights, and personhood.

## Conclusions

Recognition is the foundation of identity because an identity does not exist as a self-conscious identity, separate from others, with its own unique characteristics, until it is recognized as such. Recognition is the foundation of citizenship because citizenship is a legal status wherein a subject, entity or group is recognized as a legitimate political actor and bearer of rights. Citizenship also provides legal confirmation or acknowledgment that a person is a competent political subject by granting rights and duties appropriate to that position. To be a citizen, to enjoy this legal status, is to be recognized and respected as trustworthy, capable, and responsible, the political equivalent of being recognized as an adult. Full citizenship should be understood as the institutional embodiment of the end of the struggle for recognition.

It should be made clear that the struggle for recognition is not simply a struggle to measure up or assimilate to dominant groups' standards. The struggle for recognition is also a means by which oppressed groups call the dominant group or groups' categories of recognition and evaluation into question. That is, a struggle for recognition is an occasion to revise democracy's self-understanding of identity, personhood, and citizenship. Ideally, the struggle for recognition also involves reflection about prevailing standards, norms, and values by all involved. A true struggle for recognition is not only a struggle between individuals and groups for recognition of their particular experiences under an ostensibly neutral conception of citizenship. Rather, true struggles for recognition must also involve a struggle between individuals and groups for recognition of their particular experiences and the ongoing redefinition of the scope and



content of citizenship by citizens themselves. This turns politics into a process of learning and self-actualization.

We have not reached the end of history, not even in the qualified sense that Fukuyama claimed. We are instead at the beginning point for the active creation of history by all citizens for all citizens, whomever, or whatever, they may be.

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## Deploying Masculinity in the Transphobic Framework of the Islamic Middle-East

**Abstract:** Transgender identity poses a threat to the well-established gender roles in the Islamic Middle East, where the acquisition of masculinity, the initial and essential criterion for a man's configuration and deployment in patriarchal discourses, has not become a major concern for academic studies. The Man, enjoying his reified superiority to the Woman granted by religious and cultural discourses, does not question his subjugated position in the heteronormative system he is constituted in. The deployment of masculinity is of great significance in the outbreak of transphobia in the Islamic framework of Turkey and Iran and this paper intends to examine the role of masculinity and the traditional binary of Man/Woman in the harassment, insult, hate murders, persecutions, victimisations, and obligatory sex change surgeries LGBT individuals in the Islamic context are exposed to, focusing on two countries, the former being a country in the process of its EU accession negotiations and the latter being one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations. Deployment of masculinity and the Man/Woman binary is of importance to this study since in patriarchal heteronormative discourses dominant in these two countries a man is expected to be manly and effeminacy is considered offensive, as a result of which effeminate men are harassed in these heteronormative societies, seen in the case of the Transwoman, while manliness is an admired characteristic for women and masculine women, ironically, are encouraged and flattered.

**Keywords:** Transphobia, Islam, gender, heteronormativity, subjectification

### Introduction

The Transgender identity is the embodiment of the arbitrariness of the link between a signifier and a signified; a transwoman, for instance, with her female appearance outside but with a male body inside; or with a male body outside but this time maybe feminine inside, or vice versa, signifies the multiplicity of sexual identities. Thus, the very existence of the transgender establishes and celebrates the fact that there is no nature; what we have, instead, is only the naturalization or denaturalization of things originally *unnatural*, i.e., culture-bound and culturally-imposed. Influenced by poststructuralist thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan, Judith Butler studied the production and deployment of sexualities and genders in Western thought. Butler's "mainly philosophical exploration frequently integrated Foucauldian insights into her analysis of the ways in which modern culture tended to use sexual categories as if they were natural, rather than socially constructed" (Bristow 232).

Integrating Foucault's study on power relations and sexuality into her own work, she states that sex is always-already normative and all gender is in fact nothing but drag, which suggests imitation is at the heart of the heterosexual project and its gender binarisms, that drag is not a secondary "imitation that presupposes a prior and original gender, but that hegemonic heterosexuality is itself a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealizations" (Butler 125).

For her, drag, just like the transgender, cannot be an imitation since there is no such intrinsic gender as *man* or *woman* to imitate; the signified 'man' or 'woman' is nothing but an illusion. Butler calls attention to the performative 'nature' of gender stereotypes, a metaphorical sort of theatrical performance, and her conceptualization of performativity cannot be grasped by ignoring the process of iterability and a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. She intends to denaturalize heterosexuality by way of illustrating a displaced repetition—womanliness reperformed on a male body—of its performance.

However, the repetition she mentions “is not performed *by* a subject; this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject” (95). This iterability implies that “performance is not a singular ‘act’ or event, but a ritualized production” (95). Transgender identity is not always something the subject deliberately assumes; it is not something the subject does indeed, but “a process through which that subject is constituted” (Jagose 87). By enabling access into the formation of sexuality and gender, Butler denaturalizes and lays bare the heteronormative frameworks and compulsory heterosexuality, and in addition, the artificial liaison between the signifier and the signified. Therefore, just like Butler, the transwoman denaturalizes and lays bare the heterosexist frameworks and with her existence itself poses a threat to the well-established gender roles in the Islamic Middle East. Transphobia begins in school and family unit. Transgender people are ghettoized in cosmopolitan cities in Turkey, since there is no life for them outside of the big cities. This is why they are exiled from their hometowns to big cities and most of them are obliged to do sex work. Even in big cities they face oppression, persecution, prosecution and violence, yet they cannot take legal action.

The acquisition of masculinity, the initial and essential criterion for a man’s configuration and deployment in patriarchal discourses, has not become a major concern for academic studies in the Middle East, unlike feminism, which has always had privilege and priority over the masculinity studies. The Man, as the protector and maintainer of his wife, enjoys his well-established superiority to the Woman granted by the Quran, which is straightforwardly stated in such suras as al-Baqarah and al-Nisa and thus, he does not feel the need to question his position in the heteronormative binary system he is imprisoned in. The deployment of masculinity and the reified superiority of men to women are of great significance in the emergence of transphobia, as well as homophobia, in the Islamic framework of Turkey and Iran. This paper attempts to examine the reified role of masculinity and the traditional polarity of Man/Woman in the harassment, insult, hate murders, persecutions, victimizations, and obligatory sex change surgeries LGBT individuals in Islamic context are exposed to. Deployment of masculinity and the Man/Woman binary is of great significance to this study since in these patriarchal heteronormative discourses a man is expected to be manly and effeminacy is considered offensive, as a result of which effeminate men are harassed in these heterosexist societies, while, surprisingly and ironically, manliness is an admired characteristic for women and masculine women, therefore, are flattered. Unless the gender and sexual policies are revised and modernized in order to involve, recognize and protect individuals with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, Turkey’s EU aspirations will turn out to be nothing but wishful thinking.

### Theoretical Framework

The term transgender is quite recent, with a history of forty years, yet regarding the terms transvestite and transsexual it originates from, it precedes the heterosexual, since the western thought, not needing to justify the heterosexuality it normalized, first named and defined the non-heterosexual identities it marginalized. The process follows a similar pattern in the Middle-East, though with some delay, for sexual identities in the Middle-East are modelled on the Western development of sexualities. Having deployed and defined the non-heterosexual, the heteronormative thought configured and coined the term heterosexuality based on its other, the ex-centric identities, rendering it anything the queer was not. The first term referring to the transgender identity, ‘transgenderal’ seems to have been first used in print by Virginia Prince in a paper in her magazine *Transvestia*, in December 1969. However, by 1978, she had already replaced it with the term transgenderist and begun classifying the trans people into three; transvestites, transgenderists, and transsexuals. In this classification, transvestism refers to individuals dressing in a manner traditionally associated with the opposite sex, not requiring queer identity, and transsexualism involves people having undergone a sex change surgery, whereas transgenderism refers to those adopting the exterior manifestations of the opposite sex without any surgical interventions. However, very soon the term transgenderist was used as an umbrella term involving both transvestites and transsexuals.

At this point, it is of great importance to highlight the distinction between 'trans' as transformation; 'trans' as crossing; and 'trans' as going beyond or through (Kessler and McKenna, 2000, qtd. in Ekins and King). Until the 1990s, the first two significations dominated, but then the transgender began to be considered the one going beyond and transgressing against heteronormativity and the western binary logic.

### Analysis

Adopting the new term 'transgender' is quite similar to the process homosexuality has gone through. The term queer has been adopted and replaced terms such as homosexual, gay, or lesbian, for these terms had already been medicalized, psychologized, psychiatrized and even criminalized in western thought and all heteronormative cultures. Similarly, the medicalized and psychologized terms transvestism and transsexualism were replaced with transgenderism, a term, just like queer, avoiding stigmatization and even definition by signifying diversity.

Like the feminist movement, transgenderist movements first struggled for equal rights but later on they started to fight the binary logic itself, since transgender individuals will never be able to attain the recognition they have been seeking so long as the binary gender roles exist in patriarchal societies. Today, transgenderism cannot be accepted or tolerated in the Middle East, where the Woman is still considered subjected to the Man, especially because of the influence of Islam. The marginalization and stigmatization of the transgender in fact reveals that the Woman is regarded as the inferior gender. In the Islamic context, a man's adopting the exterior manifestations or manners traditionally attributed to the opposite sex, which is considered the inferior biological sex, is insulting and also challenging for the patriarch. In Turkey, such phrases as 'Erkek Fatma' (Manly Fatima) and 'Erkek gibi kız' (manly girl) are used to praise the woman, whereas those like 'Kız gibi' (feminine-effeminate) are used to insult men, which shows how the Woman is seen. The deployment of masculinity, i.e., the definition of masculinity by heterosexist patriarchal discourses, therefore, turns out to be the main reason underlying transphobia. Today some writers such as Cheshire Calhoun still argue that unlike race and biological sex, transgenderism can be concealed and thus transgender people have an advantage over the other discriminated categories. By concealing their identity, she claims, they can avoid any persecution or prosecution, which is true in the Middle-Eastern context. However, it is obvious that pushing the transgender back into the closet cannot bring liberty at all and to what extent a transgender can conceal his/her identity is another controversial claim.

Transphobia, the cause of the need to closet, appears in different forms in different societies. Sometimes it is just a failure to sympathize or a prejudice, but it can come out in different manifestations like psychological or physical violence, too. Sometimes homeless shelters and prisons do not admit transwomen to women's areas and force them to use men's sections in the States, but recently there has been some changes in some areas, e.g New York City's Department of Homeless Services. In Turkey, however, let alone being discriminated in shelters, the transgender people are not even accepted into shelters. For this reason, the first shelter for transgender individuals was founded in 2013 in İstanbul. Melisa Karam, a Lebanese transwoman living in İstanbul, who benefited from the shelter while she was waiting for the UN approval for her application for resettlement as a transgender refugee, argues that their existence is denied even by the UN as the UN failed to support her financially, giving her no option but sex work (Ağıröl).

Transphobia exists in healthcare as well. There are many cases in which healthcare workers seeing transgender patients refuse to administer necessary treatment. For instance, hospitals throughout the United States have recognized that over the last decade, some groups of people face significant barriers to health care because of bias and discrimination. In their article "Creating Equal Access to Quality Health Care for Transgender Patients: Transgender affirming Hospital Policies," Lambda Legal shares the results of a 2011 survey of more than 6000 transgender Americans: "19% of the respondents reported being refused health care due to their transgender or gender-nonconforming status. In addition, 28% had postponed

necessary health care when sick or injured, and 33% had delayed or had not sought preventive care because of experiences of health care discrimination based on their transgender status” (2).

In Turkey, fortunately, there is no such discrimination in state-owned hospitals simply because transwomen do not even dare go there. Most transwomen have to do sex work since they can work neither for state-owned nor private institutions, which means they cannot benefit from the state healthcare system without social security. Moreover, they often do not need to go to hospitals since when they have occupational accidents, they often end up slain, their throats slashed, or stabbed tens of times. In Turkey, transgender individuals are violently murdered and authorities turn a deaf ear to these hate crimes. For instance, in November 2013 a 26-year-old transwoman called İdil was stabbed and seriously wounded by a client. The investigating police officers, İdil claims, upon their arrival at the hospital, asked the injured victim why she was treated in women's ward and mocked her. Moreover, Pembe Hayat LGBT Solidarity Association lawyer Ahmet Toköz complains that currently there is no investigation to arrest the assailant (Bilber). Even if the suspects are arrested in Turkey, they are rewarded with plea bargaining options or various reductions in their sentences, for sodomy is regarded as one of the most grievous provocations to which a man can be exposed. It is a common case that the murderer claims that he did not know the woman he picked was a transwoman, that he killed the victim because she had male genitals or because she wanted to practice anal sex upon him. The media does not pay much attention to these murders and police forces remain reluctant and biased. Such excuses form the ground on which the murderers are rewarded with sentence reductions and by rewarding murderers, the government and police forces become the murderers' accomplices. In 2010, Turkey occupied the first rank among the 47 Member States of The Council of Europe with eight transgender murders. In 2009, Turkey and Italy had the first rank with six murders each. Since 2007, the number of reported LGBT murders is over forty in Turkey; however, the actual number might be much higher, for these statistics are gathered from LGBT organizations only and many other murders might have been committed because of sexual identity. There is an obvious increase in the number of LGBT murders or these murders are becoming more visible in the media.

Recently transgender people feel obliged to establish a union, just like the international ICRSE and SWAN, since they are exposed to physical and psychological violence, they are prosecuted by the police, they are fined under the Misdemeanor Law and have to pay 125 TL each time. The intention is not only a union comprising sex workers, but one involving activists fighting for sex workers' rights. The activists trying to establish the country's first sex workers union aim to protect the health, security and education rights of sex workers in Turkey, where the majority of them work without licenses or social security. Many transgender sex workers are discriminated against in the heterosexual society when they try to take legal actions, and therefore, they hope to liaise with other unions and societies to fight the heteronormative system. Today there are about 3000 registered woman sex workers in the 56 registered brothels in Turkey, though registering them does not mean social security and retirement benefits or full protection by the law. However, this figure excludes the unregistered ones and the transgender sex workers. The total number is believed to be about 100,000. In the biggest three cities, Ankara, İstanbul, and İzmir, there are about 3000 women waiting to get registered to work in brothels. In this way, transwomen aim to gain security and freedom, two essential items in the Turkish constitution. They want the government to recognize sex work as “work” and to better their standards. Prostitution is mentioned in the Turkish Penal Code and sex workers have to be registered according to the law. However, statistics show that many sex workers are unregistered and have no health or social security. The first sex union was established in Argentina during the 1970s. Holland and Hungary also have unions for sex workers and Turkish activists ask why Turkey does not recognize them and insistently denies their existence.

Unfortunately, the government insistently and decisively ignores these demands. For example, Selma Aliye Kavaf, a Minister of State of Turkey, responsible for Women and Family Affairs, and a member of parliament has recently stated that she opposes homosexuality since she believes homosexuality, without

distinguishing it from other non-heterosexual identities, is a biological disorder, a disease and it needs to be treated. Moreover, she has stated that she does not think highly of gay marriages. Her remarks sparked controversy and were protested by antihomophobia activists in Turkey, but the government keeps silent and seem to be backing her up. Turkey, an associate member of the European Union and the Council of Europe, is still in the process of its EU accession negotiations; however, the Transphobic attitude and the indifference to the demands lay bare the deficiency in human rights and freedom of expression, which the country yet has to face up to. As a result, in the frame of negotiations with the European Union, the Union has requested Turkey to improve freedom of expression and human rights related to sexual identity. In the 21st century, Turkey, pretending to be a liberalizing country, yet the transgender's case clearly indicates that the country will continue coming under increasing criticism from developed countries as well as the E.U. unless it reconsiders and changes its current human rights policies.

After the 2007 elections in Turkey, the new government started to prepare a new Constitution named "Civil Society Based Constitution," emphasizing that it would replace Turkey's current Constitution written by the military rule in 1982. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) Government Spokesman Cemil Çiçek states that they intend to prepare a new Constitution which will represent all the society. He also states that they expect contribution of the whole society before the draft Constitution will be submitted to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey; nevertheless, LGBT individuals are persistently and intentionally ignored and it is known that the demanded items including the concepts of "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" have been disregarded recently, keeping only the "sex" concept in the new "Civil Society Based" Constitution, which violates the notion of "equality." The current Constitution of Turkey, thus, still fails to recognize the LGBT reality in Turkey. Discrimination on the basis of one's sexual identity is still not defined as a crime in the current Constitution. What is worse, LGBT identities are not even referred to or implied in it. Therefore, in practice, this situation denies LGBT individuals legal protection, which makes LGBT individuals face discrimination, oppression, and violence.

As for transphobia in employment, in Turkey, unlike in the States, transgender individuals do not face discrimination at work at all, since they will be eliminated during the application or hiring process. Unemployment? In San Francisco, the unemployment rate was said to be 70 percent amongst the city's transgender population in 1999. In Turkey, it is really much lower since most transgender people do sex work. Last but not least, many LGB individuals and communities are uncomfortable with the transgender phenomenon and they marginalize the transgender. Some gay bars do not admit transgender people at all, and in others, only some privileged transgendered people may enter. It is ironic of course to see different minorities, all of whom are rejected and marginalized by the mainstream society, fighting one another and ghettoising themselves further.

The transgender's relation to and attitude towards the homosexual is filmed by Tanaz Eshaghian Tanaz's 2008 BBC documentary titled *Transsexuals in Iran*. In the documentary, he interviews transgender individuals, surgeons performing sex-change operations and religious authorities in Iran. In Iran, surprisingly, the government pays up to half the cost of sex change operations. The system is ostensibly trans-friendly and accepting; however, regarding the oppressed and harassed homosexuals who are not given any option other than sex change operation, for homosexuality is a crime, the process is inhumane indeed. The regime does not let anyone exist unless they are Male or Female. Anything and anyone ex-centric is persecuted there and Iran is proud of having performed hundreds of sex change operations in the last decade, which is approximately ten times higher than the figure in Europe. The Islamic government is actually trying to maintain the strict binary Man /Woman and this is why they urge all homosexuals undergo sex change surgeries. These operations are the only means of avoiding persecution and prosecution in the country, apart from taking refuge abroad. In the documentary, a transwoman even says that she does not approve of homosexuality as it is a sin and she avoids making friends with homosexuals. In contrast to Turkey, where the LGB individuals marginalize and excommunicate the transgender, in Iran



the transgender looks down upon the queer. The ironic case shows how well established and internalized binary logic is; one is either a man meant to be with women or a woman meant to be with men. A man's adopting female manners or appearance is unacceptable since it is considered his relegation to the secondary gender, which shows why the government does not tolerate same sex sexual acts or ex-centric sexual identities. Transsexual people are eccentric, too, but with the government's so-called help, they somehow fit in the gender binary.

## Conclusions

There have been numerous studies on the discrimination against women and the process of becoming a woman, i.e., the acquisition of womanly roles, has been in the limelight for decades. However, masculinity studies are still few and the notion of manliness is yet to be elaborated. Simone de Beauvoir believed that existence precedes essence; hence, one is not born a woman, but becomes one (301). Likewise, one is not born a man but has to become a man and manliness is as difficult as womanliness in patriarchal societies, but this is often ignored. Just like a woman, a man has to fit in the traditional roles defined for a man and if one fails to do so, he is stigmatized and accused of effeminacy. Transwomen are persecuted and stigmatized only because of the Man's well-established falsely superior relation to the Woman. Their transgression is considered an offence and a challenge to the dominant discourses and ideologies in these countries. Thus, the deliberate indifference of security forces and the government indicates that the authorities are accomplices of these political murders.

In Islamic Middle Eastern societies, as seen in the Turkish and Iranian contexts, for the recognition of different sexual identities and orientations, trying to raise people's awareness about sexuality and explaining the diverse nature of sexuality takes a really long time. To this end, LGBTQ individuals and communities need to fight the education system, religious, political, medical and social discourses taking the traditional binaries for granted and seek to subvert and/or move beyond the binary divide. As long as the binary divide survives and the Male is privileged over the Female, there cannot be a full recognition of LGBT individuals.

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# Iconicity and the Invisible Crisis of Reclaimed Gender Identity: The Case of Agora and the Visible Human Project

**Abstract:** The final decades of the 20th century witnessed the advent of theories and practices committed to radical revisionism of received epistemic paradigms vis-à-vis formerly marginalized groups. While the impact of gender, race, postcolonial and subaltern studies has been felt beyond the academe in everyday interactions, the backlash has not been tardy, either. In what follows, I investigate gender identity representation in two vastly dissimilar contemporary projects which ostensibly reclaim women's place in society and thinking alike, and whose dissemination is far and wide, hence their iconicity, too. In chronological order, they are the US National Library of Medicine's Visible Human Project (1989–95) and Alejandro Amenabár's film *Agora* (2009). The VHP prides itself in providing data sets for the scientific study of the human body as both male and female. *Agora* reclaims a voice for Hypatia, the female philosopher, mathematician, astronomer and teacher of Alexandria, who fell victim to the patriarchal intolerance of early Christianity. For all their merits in drawing attention to women, the two projects can also be faulted for their biased identitary representations. While examining the literature on the VHP and resorting to Said's *Orientalism* in Amenabár's case, my comparative analysis aims to uncover and analyze gender-related conflicts and identity displacements at work within both.

**Keywords:** the Visible Human Project, Hypatia (*Agora*), Marc Quinn, patriarchy, gender identity crisis, iconicity

## Introduction

While so much critical ink has been spilt on identity, especially gender identity, without reaching much of a conclusion, I would like to investigate identity as performance (in Judith Butler's terms)<sup>14</sup> in two vastly different projects, a Spanish English-language film and a US National Library of Medicine anatomo-medical project, whose cognitive ramifications bear on identity issues. I will start my analysis with *Agora* (2009), directed and co-written by Alejandro Amenabár, which ostensibly recuperates an outstanding feminine figure for her active involvement in the agora and the academe alike.

To understand the (controversial) gender iconicity which both projects, despite their different agendas, generate, it is worth noticing, with Benedikt Feldges, that in a pictorial symbol system, icons "acquire characteristic contours through repetition" (2), which moreover distinguish between the icons, and that "depending on the degree of exposure they are granted..., such icons consequently also aggregate semantic depth" (2). In fact, icons "accumulate a pictorial biography with new layers of meaning added by each pictorial narrative in which they appear," so that they "successively aggregate to form sophisticated pictorial terms" which generate together a pictorial vocabulary (Feldges 2). Representing a woman, Hypatia, as a philosopher and mathematician, a free thinker and supporter of human rights, in one film

<sup>14</sup> Briefly stated, Judith Butler delineates *performativity* in the context of describing (rather than defining and thus reifying) the body in conjunction with gender, so as to challenge the traditional essentialist view that they are substantive phenomena. On the contrary, she contends, the gendered body exists in and through *the public performance of rules of gender identity*: "the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time" (Butler, "Performative Acts" 523; see also 521, 526–8; Butler, *Gender Trouble* xiv–xv, 32–3, 41–4, 143, 170–80).

(Amenabár's *Agora*) cannot be instantly conducive to the iconicity of either Hypatia or women. Representing Hypatia, alongside a host of other powerful or outstanding women, also in art (such as Judy Chicago's installation *The Dinner Party*), yet also reinforcing the message in various verbal media (such as Judy Chicago's books,<sup>15</sup> let alone feminist writing and teaching) certainly draws attention to that particular woman and more generally to women, gender representation and perhaps also to gender inequity. Furthermore, as we shall see, purporting to visualize the human body as both male and female, as the US National Library of Medicine does with its Visible Human Project, can in principle, at least with some audiences, bring gender identity—and a long tradition of neglect or downright bias—to the fore.

According to Feldges, individual familiarity with visual symbols can, under certain circumstances, be coterminous with *collective visual literacy*, construed not in broad terms, viz. as “a knowledge base that enables comprehension of visual information,” but more strictly as “a collective knowledge of icons, emblems, and other generic visual symbols” (2). The two conditions to be met simultaneously for the generation and cultivation of such a collective vocabulary of visual terms are: (1) the dissemination of these pictures to a large audience, and (2) their repeated featuring of “a number of icons, emblems, and other generic symbols, so that audiences can recognize and share in the process of developing their significance” (Feldges 3). No wonder the broadcast medium—the TV and the Internet—acts as the main generator of (inter) national visual literacy. Is gender identity, especially with the aid of its supporting feminist discursive practices both inside and outside the academe, becoming iconic for the turn of the millennium West, or is it merely the site of overt and covert conflicts and tensions?

### ***Agora* (2009): From Conflictual Gender Identity to Conflictual Ethnic/Religious Identities**

*Agora*'s protagonist, Hypatia, the philosopher, mathematician, astronomer and teacher of Alexandria, did not fall victim to the patriarchal intolerance of Christian zealots without a fight. Although banished from public life, Hypatia resolutely denounced the anti-Jewish policy of the Christian monk-warriors, the Parabalani, and demanded their restriction by the local Roman authorities (*Agora* 01:12:48 - 01:13:59); she did not flee from the Library of Alexandria without trying to save its scrolls from Christian attack; nor did she ever abandon her research pursuits, either. Does Amenabár's film thereby champion a woman (or women?) or gender identity revisionism? Of course, that is not what feature films ought by definition to have on their agenda, yet certain elements in *Agora* do warrant an investigation of its identity politics and, as I hope to demonstrate, bifurcate it into gender and ethnic/religious identities.

In the 1970s, Hypatia (c. 370–415/416) re-emerged from historical oblivion into favorable light courtesy of Judy Chicago's researches: she is one of the 39 guests of *The Dinner Party*<sup>16</sup> (1974–79). Indeed, Hypatia has returned in force since 1985, when the American journal of feminist philosophy proudly bearing her name finally appeared as the spin-off of the Society for Women in Philosophy (see Gruen and Wylie). Hypatia's is also a compelling case of the return of the repressed—patriarchy's repressed—for popular consumption, at least with the 2009 release of *Agora*.

In the light of modern attempts at re-inscribing the female philosopher into history, albeit with the aid of truncated testimony from biased late ancient sources (Wider 52, 55-7), Hypatia appears to have been as much the victim of male jealousy of her intellectual accomplishments<sup>17</sup> and leadership of Alexandria's Neoplatonic school, as of “political jealousies” (Socrates Scholasticus) between the Roman authorities and Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria. Such tensions Hypatia was blamed—*calumniously* (Socrates Scholasticus)—

<sup>15</sup> Judy Chicago. *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage* (1979), *Embroidering Our Heritage: The Dinner Party Needlework* (1980), and *Beyond the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (1975).

<sup>16</sup> Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* is a collaborative multimedia installation that celebrates female figures excluded from conventional androcentric historiography, whose endeavours, accomplishments and/or legendary powers may serve as an empowering example for women. For an overview of the controversies around the project, see Ciobanu.

<sup>17</sup> Hypatia's writings were lost when the Library of Alexandria was destroyed in 640 (Wider 55).

for fueling. Perhaps both forms of rivalry become intelligible when framed as gender frictions within kyriarchy (in Schüssler Fiorenza's terms), including the hegemonic religion's branding of other faiths decadent and effeminate.<sup>18</sup>

In modern times, Hypatia's biography has been a matter of historical speculation mostly by prejudiced males since the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>19</sup> (Wider 21-6, 54-5). With Chicago's *The Dinner Party*<sup>20</sup> and Amenabár's *Agora*, however, the interest in Hypatia has shifted to a larger audience, whose professional interests are not scholastic, and which goes to the museum or the cinema for pleasure seeking. It is my contention that both media, the museumified multimedia installation and the feature film, provide for the ready iconisation if not of a particular individual (which *Agora* does, however), then at least of a class: suppressed women and their discourse.

Understandably, *Agora* does not aspire to the status of historiographical metafiction, in Linda Hutcheon's terms. Nonetheless, the trailer gestures towards re-establishing historical truth, when it claims that *Agora* presents "a true story" (01:33) about "the courage of a woman" (01:39)<sup>21</sup> and (in biblical idiom) "the fall of man" (01:43) (<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOXKF1mb9Hc>>), the latter presumably through the fall of Hellenistic Alexandria, i.e. the repository of classical wisdom. Yet, not only does *Agora* fail to provide the revisionist, women-empowering story it may be mistaken for by unwary audiences mindful of the film's politically-correct historicizing captions, but it recycles biased old lies in equally biased, romanticized garb, especially as regards Hypatia's death.<sup>22</sup> According to Socrates Scholasticus's *Ecclesiastica historia* (c. 439), one March day during Lent Hypatia was waylaid by a Christian mob<sup>23</sup> led by Peter, Cyril's reader, dragged from her carriage to the church/ Caesareum and stripped naked; they "raze[d] the skin and ren[t] the flesh of her body with sharp shells" (qtd. in Wider 58); her body thus flayed, they quartered it and "took her mangled limbs to a place called Cinaron, and there burnt them"<sup>24</sup> (EH 7.15).

<sup>18</sup> *Agora* intimates no less in the Christian "vassalage" episode (01:25:12-01:28:37) where Orestes (Oscar Isaac), the historical Roman prefect of Alexandria, is forced to listen to Cyril's (Sammy Samir) reading of an excerpt from the First Epistle to Timothy (*attributed* to Paul) precisely on the submission women owed men (1 Tim 2.11-14; *Agora* 01:25:12-01:26:22)!

<sup>19</sup> An exception is language philosopher Fritz Mauthner, whose novel *Hypatia* (1892) "extend[s] his audience's vision of the epistemological value of philosophy, not just to offer a feminist critique of a woman's restricted position as philosopher," thereby "anticipat[ing] contemporary analyses of the relationship between institutions and discourses" (Arens 48).

<sup>20</sup> Judy Chicago positions Hypatia in Wing One as the last of the outstanding ancient women: the embroidered runner depicts Hypatia's death through limb rending and "four crying female faces from youth to old age that represent Hypatia in the Coptic style"

([http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner\\_party/place\\_settings/hypatia.php](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/place_settings/hypatia.php)).

Her portrait after a Coptic image shows a woman whose mouth has been restrained by a harness-like band which loops into Hypatia's initial

([http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner\\_party/place\\_settings/image.php?i=13&image=476&b=ps](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/place_settings/image.php?i=13&image=476&b=ps)).

For Chicago, Hypatia is, emblematically, the muted woman—or perhaps the strong woman forever silenced.

<sup>21</sup> "One woman—a legend—ahead of her time, stood to unite mankind" (*Agora* trailer 00:22-00:30). "Mankind" re-instates women's invisibility!

<sup>22</sup> My insistence on the film's historicity derives from certain scenes which indicate historical documentation. Thus, the Serapeum episode where Hypatia rejects Orestes' advances (*Agora* 00:24:20-00:24:55) draws upon Damascius (Il. 6-32, qtd. in Wider 53), the biographer of Hypatia's alleged husband, Isidorus the philosopher. For a poetic fictionalisation cum gender-revisionist account of Hypatia's death, see Molinaro.

<sup>23</sup> Wider (57) speaks of "a mob of Christian monks" that killed Hypatia "in a vicious and blood-thirsty way."

<sup>24</sup> The translation available at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf202.ii.x.xv.html> omits the flaying detail, unlike the one provided in Wider (58). Likewise, the 1854 *Ecclesiastical History of Socrates* glosses over the exact manner of "murder[ing] her [Hypatia] with shells" (349). While the URL of Christian Classics Ethereal Library renders Philip Schaff's involvement implicit, neither of the other sources identifies the English translator.

Continues Socrates Scholasticus: "This affair brought not the least opprobrium, not only upon Cyril, but also upon the whole Alexandrian church. And surely nothing can be farther from the spirit of Christianity than the allowance of massacres, fights, and transactions of that sort."<sup>25</sup>

Who would expect a doctrinal account to fully expose to prejudicial publicity the very institution whose encomium it writes and which sponsors (on pain of banning) the enterprise?

What could Amenabár's romanticized version of Hypatia's death possibly contribute to my concern with the conflicts and crisis of gender identity? After all, *Agora* has successfully made the historical Alexandrian female philosopher its protagonist. How could the politically sanitized demise of the heroine bear on *identity* issues? To answer this, let us review Amenabár's script. Davus (Max Minghella), her former slave and, unbeknownst to her, loving admirer, humanely smothers Hypatia (Rachel Weisz) to circumvent the ignominious death by stoning that the Parabalani are preparing for her.<sup>26</sup> Why did Amenabár shy away from using violent special effects for gore to depict her death as reported in some early sources?<sup>27</sup> I would read such reticence along with another *Agora* oddity: the Parabalani/Christians are acted by racially marked actors—such as Galilee-born Ashraf Barhom (Ammonius), Jerusalem-born Sammy Samir (Cyril) or London-born Clint Dyer (Hierax)—seemingly for the sake of historical accuracy. However, the cast for historically dark-skinned personages, including Jesus, does not follow similar lines in other recent productions. For instance, of the largely Italian cast in Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), a film which purportedly restores the historical local color by recourse to Aramaic, only two Temple guards have "Arab" names, Adel Bakri and (Tunisian-born) Abel Jafri. It is my contention that despite its efforts to secure Hypatia her place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century imaginary, "*Agora*" succeeds better at restoring conflict as the critical point where identity—beyond gender identity—is staked.

To state it otherwise, "*Agora*" implicitly uses Hypatia and gender identity to insinuate a more crucial form of identity crisis in our times, rather than hers alone: ethnic identity, with a bearing on the (re)configuration of the Western imaginary of who the enemy is after 9/11. Why do the Parabalani's attacks on the Jews ("*Agora*" 00:58:45-01:00:19; 01:11:23-01:12:50), through the ploy of historically verisimilar costuming, head-gear and complexion of the actors, rather smack of the War on Terror rhetoric of here's-what-the-Arab-out-there-is-up-to-if-we-left-him-to-his-devices? (By contrast, Hypatia's mathematician slave, Aspasius (Homayoun Ershadi), has the features of the "tame," understanding and supportive Oriental.) Why do many shots juxtapose the fair-skinned, white-robed polytheistic Alexandrians—clean-shaven men, yet "Oriental"-looking women—with the bearded, dark-skinned, turbaned Christians and black-robed Parabalani ("*Agora*" 00:07:00-00:07:48; 00:28:10-00:31:20; 00:31:50-00:32:44), including bishop Cyril (00:58:29-00:58:39), even as Hypatia's students are also shown several times to be ethnically and racially diverse (00:03:26-00:03:32)? Why are the various clashes between Christians/Parabalani and non-Christians likely to tip the balance of "terrorism" in the direction of the former (the fire trial, 00:08:35-00:09:19; caption, 00:56:53-00:57:01; attack on Orestes, 01:30:04) even when the conflict is started by the latter (Serapeum custodians, 00:26:05-00:26:36; the Jews in retaliation for the Sabbath attack, 01:07:17-01:09:00)? Why does the trailer focus on violent clashes, show Cyril's ominous promise to "purify" Alexandria against the raising of the Bible and followed by the image of a Jew being pushed off a

<sup>25</sup> See Drake (esp. 34-6) for a balanced account of the rise of extremist Christian militancy by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century in response to Emperor Julian the Apostate's rescinding of the Constantinian settlement, which provides the context for understanding in part Hypatia's death.

<sup>26</sup> Originally, the hermit-warriors sadistically contemplate flaying Hypatia, consistent with Socrates Scholasticus's account: "She'll scream alright when we skin her alive" (*Agora* 01:50:41-01:50:42); however, Davus averts such torturous demise by invoking the anti-feminist issue of polluting blood (*Agora* 01:50:50); another Parabalano advises stoning instead (01:50:55-01:50:56).

<sup>27</sup> The final caption series provides a half-historicising epilogue about Hypatia's lost works (*Agora* 01:53:59-01:54:06) and demise: the body being dragged through the streets, then burnt (01:53:39-01:53:45).



cliff (00:40-00:45), and quote at length Hypatia's admonition to the council that unless it acts now, the Parabalani "will continue to do the same over and over again" until Alexandria has been depopulated—uttered against more images of violence perpetrated by "Arab"-looking males (00:56-01:09)? On the face of it, the "terrorists" are identified in the film, accurately from a historical perspective, as early Christians—to the dismay of literal-minded Christian congregations watching *Agora*. However, the Parabalani's quasi-inexistent headquarters<sup>28</sup> elide this group not with Christians but with bushmen, i.e. people beyond the pale of "civilisation" as represented by the Alexandrian philosophers, whose library the Parabalani storm and turn upside down (00:51:02-00:52:52, esp. 00:52:19-00:52:33). Coincidence? *Day Night Day Night* (2006), written and directed by Julia Loktev, features as a would-be suicide bomber an anonymous 19-year-old woman (Luisa Williams, born Luisa Colon), whose non-descript ethnic identity, from facial features to accent, nevertheless echoes the typical Western stereotype of the Muslim "Oriental" (woman) as critiqued by Edward Said.<sup>29</sup>

Are racial and religious displacements necessary in a film that purportedly recuperates the voice and work of Hypatia as both a model of ethics and a strong woman? Arguably, with the re-inscription of Hypatia into the *mainstream* discourse of knowledge through her mathematical and astronomical research (and her circumscription within the Euclidian geometry of the council room to speak up for spiritual freedom), she is made to espouse a *modern* Euro-American identity based on the Enlightenment myth<sup>30</sup> of rationality-for-progress. My contention is that Amenabár's Hypatia stands for Western civilization at odds with the fanatical religious zeal and homicidal deeds of the Parabalani/fringe people/terrorists. She articulates her ethics, "I believe in philosophy" (*Agora* 01:21:11-01:21:12), in response to a councilor's provocation (in the context of coerced Christian conversion) that Hypatia "believe[s] in nothing" (01:21:00-01:21:09). Read rather: "I believe in reason, science, and human progress and freedom"—the Enlightenment project extolled by Habermas yet found wanting by postmodern philosophers like Lyotard. Contrariwise, the Parabalani flaunt a destructive ethics, encapsulated in Ammonius's answer to Davus's frightened ethical musing after massacring the Jews of Alexandria:

Davus: Do you ever think we're mistaken? ...

Ammonius: We're still alive. Why? Because it was His will to save us from the [Jews'] stones. God wants us to do here what we do. (*Agora* 01:17:58-01:18:00, 01:18:48-01:19:01)

Such *argumentum ad verecundiam*—so frequently deployed in Christian and more generally in religious discourse to legitimise oppression of the other—thus forestalls any ethical reconsideration of the Parabalani's savage acts to ensure religious conformity.

Understandably, repelling the righteous thinker—once recuperated *into* and *for* the Western mainstream—cannot go as far as showing her being flayed in punishment for being the "witch" (*Agora*

<sup>28</sup> The Parabalani cart the dead to the funeral pyre in a desert place on the shore by a fortress (*Agora* 01:17:10-01:17:58). In fact, *Agora* never indicates where/what the Parabalani's "headquarters" might be—apart from the church-converted Serapeum (01:36:40-01:37:04; 01:42:03-01:42:25). Early in the film, Ammonius preaches God to the mob gathered in the agora right in front of the Serapeum (00:15:00-00:16:38).

<sup>29</sup> As the Russian American director confesses, her idea of the Times Square threat came from a Russian newspaper article about a young female Chechen suicide bomber walking down a main street in Moscow; Loktev, however, was interested "to make a film that ... isn't about how something looks from the outside but feels from the inside" (qtd. in <http://www.mediasanctuary.org/event/day-night-day-night-w-filmmaker-julia-loktev>).

Nonetheless, the unnamed protagonist's vague, though "Oriental" identity in *DNDN*, alongside her mute "terrorist" engagement, arguably gives vent to the American fears of "the enemy within" in the wake of 9/11.

<sup>30</sup> My explanation resonates in part with Killings's; however, his hinges on how some Enlightenment thinkers, e.g. Voltaire, deployed Damascius's account of Hypatia's death to craft a discourse of Christianity's hostility to the freedom of enquiry (Killings 52-3).

01:27:00; 01:30:47; 01:37:05; 01:49:50; 01:50:56) and “whore” (01:37:05; 01:50:31-01:50:33; 01:50:36) whose scheming makes a Hamletian indecisive Orestes waver in whole-heartedly pledging his allegiance to the church. For all her feminine allure, *Agora*’s Hypatia is *masculinized* to become the mouthpiece of Western rationality fighting against terror and obscurantism, the always already external(ized) other of the West. Her embrace of philosophy as the discourse of truth which by its nature allows, even requires, questioning, unlike the discourse of faith (01:45:10-01:45:21), as she warns bishop Synesius of Cyrene (Rupert Evans), her former student, nods to the postmodern hermeneutics of suspicion—the distrust of all grand narratives (according to Lyotard)—while def(lecting from the political towards a philosophy of truth seemingly beyond socio-political imbroglios. Yet in the wake of 9/11 and the War on Terror (another Holy War?), it is hard to distinguish shades of (ir)rationality from geopolitical and religious skirmish.

### The Visible Human Project (VHP)

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen 1.27 NKJV). So did the US National Library of Medicine: Visible Male and Visible Female it created the Visible Humans of its much-acclaimed project—the “macroscopic” twin of the “microscopic” Human Genome Project (Waldby, *VHP* 6-7). On the face of it, introducing a scientific project like the VHP by a biblical quote is preposterous. Yet the contents bear such striking similarity as virtually to allow the analogy, though, I must insist, not in male-*and*-female terms. The VHP is demonstrably cognate rather with the other Genesis version (Gen 2.7, 2.18, 2.21-22) and the more habitually quoted one, whether in religious or secular contexts, the latter often at the level of implicit, taken for granted assumptions: “Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man” (Gen 2.22).

The Visible Human Project,<sup>31</sup> with its many applications (see <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/applications.html>), has been hailed as a state-of-the-art learning and training device which permits studying the human body (male and female) thanks to quasi-realistic imaging techniques and animation software, yet at a remove from any physical inconveniences—odors, microbiological threat, cadaver supply and timing dissection strictures—as traditionally encountered by medical students. “Today’s high-tech version of the hospital basement cadaver is the visible human project” (Johnson 145). This is so because the actual cadavers were scanned (both fresh and after cryosectioning) and the resulting images digitized and archived into a virtual anatomical atlas that permits “reshuffling” of individual images as well as “fly-through” animations; various applications simulate body movement, fluid dynamics, trauma and surgery. Furthermore, the data’s re-use is virtually inexhaustible, unlike a cadaver’s. Here is the NLM official presentation of the VHP, worth quoting in full:

<sup>31</sup> “The Visible Human Project is an outgrowth of the NLM’s 1986 Long-Range Plan. It is the creation of complete, anatomically detailed, three-dimensional representations of the normal male and female human bodies... The long-term goal of the Visible Human Project is to produce a system of knowledge structures that will transparently link visual knowledge forms to symbolic knowledge formats such as the names of body parts” (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible>).

“The Visible Human data sets are designed to serve as a reference for the study of human anatomy, to serve as a set of common public domain data for testing medical imaging algorithms, and to serve as a test bed and model for the construction of network accessible image libraries. The Visible Human data sets have been applied to a wide range of educational, diagnostic, treatment planning, virtual reality, artistic, mathematical, and industrial uses by nearly 2,000 licensees [organisations and individuals] in 48 countries. Several applications have been developed at the National Library of Medicine or under the direction of the National Library of Medicine” ([http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/visible\\_human.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/visible_human.html); emphasis added; see Waldby, *VHP* 16-17).

The Visible Human Male data set, released in November 1994, consists of MRI, CT, and anatomical images. Axial MRI images of the head and neck, and longitudinal sections of the rest of the body were obtained at 4mm intervals. The MRI images are 256 by 256 pixel resolution with each pixel made up of 12 bits of gray tone. The CT data consist of axial CT scans of the entire body taken at 1mm intervals at a pixel resolution of 512 by 512 with each pixel made up of 12 bits of gray tone. The approximately 7.5 megabyte axial anatomical images are 2048 pixels by 1216 pixels, with each pixel being 33mm in size, and defined by 24 bits of color. The anatomical cross-sections are at 1mm intervals to coincide with the CT images. There are 1,871 cross-sections for both CT and anatomical images. The complete male data set is approximately 15 gigabytes.

Higher resolution axial anatomical images of the male data set were made available in August 2000. Seventy-millimeter still photographs taken during the cryosectioning procedure were digitized at a pixel resolution of 4096 pixels by 2700 pixels. These images, each approximately 32 megabytes in size, are available for all 1,871 male color cryosections.

The Visible Human Female data set, released in November, 1995, has the same characteristics as the The Visible Human Male. However, the axial anatomical images were obtained at 0.33 mm intervals. Spacing in the "Z" dimension was reduced to 0.33mm in order to match the 0.33mm pixel sizing in the "X-Y" plane. As a result, developers interested in three-dimensional reconstructions are able to work with cubic voxels. There are 5,189 anatomical images in the Visible Human Female data set. The data set size is approximately 40 gigabytes. ([http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/visible\\_human.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/visible_human.html))

Highly sanitized "cadaver" handling for educational-training purposes is thus possible because the Visible Humans are mere *data sets of 15, 32 or 40 GB*. (Medical schools and hospitals also use simulators to give the students and staff a "real" feel of the body with the aid of built-in VHP, actually VM, applications.)

Furthermore, VHP users implicitly learn from the official NLM website the traditional anatomical *obliteration* of the identity of the male and female individuals whose cadavers were turned into the digital anatomical atlas. The first VHP cadaver belonged to a convicted criminal, 39-year-old Joseph Paul Jernigan, who had donated his body to science prior to his execution. By contrast, all that is known about the second cadaver, that of a 59-year-old anonymous "Maryland housewife," are the death cause, heart attack, and the circumstances of cadaver donation, a likely donation to science by the woman herself yet, according to an unconfirmed rumor, a bequest explicitly to the VHP by her husband (Waldby, *VHP* 1, 13, 56). These Caucasian cadavers were later joined by that of yet another anonymous premenopausal woman (Johnson 145).<sup>32</sup>

Criticism of the VHP has addressed several salient factors, such as the *ideological violence* of this anatomical project (Waldby, "Virtual Anatomy") and its creation of "impossible anatomies" which, as "technically constituted and corporeally interstitial" new "models for the body-in-itself," will "produc[e] a set of norms that is in excess" and reconfigure biomedicine's power relations (Thacker, "Lacerations"). Other critics have also objected to the modern culture's laws of intelligibility for their denial of *aisthesis* as the body's inherently irreducible differend (Curtis). While the substitution of pixels and voxels for "flesh

<sup>32</sup> After the public release of Adam and Eve, as the Visible Male and Visible Female are dubbed both within and without the VHP (Waldby, *VHP* 21), the NLM planned to image a premenopausal female body, as well as an infant or foetus; had the latter been done, it would have made "the Visible Family a viable reproductive unit" (Cartwright, qtd. in Waldby, *VHP* 18). I cannot overlook the irony of Cartwright's remark, and complete it with a personal observation: that such a new, secularised yet salvific Holy Family would still feature Joseph—what an uncanny nominal coincidence!—as the more valuable member than the nameless woman in tracing human genealogy and/as worth, on the pattern of the Tree of Jesse, which traces Jesus's Davidic genealogy through his adoptive father Joseph (Matt 1.1-18) all the way back to Adam, the son of God (Lk 3.23-38). Ironically, ADAM is also the acronym of the *Animated Dissection of Anatomy for Medicine* programs based on the VHP archive, e.g. *ADAM Interactive Anatomy* (1997) and *ADAM: The Nine Month Miracle*, with their essentialist conceptualisation pre-eminently of the female body (and sex organs) as meant for reproduction (Moore and Clarke 71, 85).

and blood” is merely a high-tech travesty of the historical transcodings into 2D representations in anatomy books and 3D wax or plastic models, there also emerge here cognitive dangers: pixelation which blurs the vision (at best) and addiction to the virtual interface to the effect of rendering the interface cognitively transparent (at worst). In her comprehensive critical study of the VHP, Catherine Waldby broaches the thin disguise of historical anatomical techniques and cognitive patterns, such as the very connection with the criminal (Jernigan’s) or socially marginal (the anonymous women’s) body, offered to scientists to be literally used up through dissection, or the nonchalant destruction of the marginal’s body to better know and heal the bodies of the socially well off; or the disturbing cognitive and eschatological implications of the virtual “whole”-body revenants.

Yet what strikes me is the popularity of the Visible Male in virtual applications,<sup>33</sup> with the attendant always already “natural” synecdochical substitution of *human* for *male* in labelling,<sup>34</sup> despite the higher resolution of the Visible Female data (Waldby, *VHP* 15, 17). Perhaps the first step was taken by the NLM itself: its webpage link to the VHP (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/onlineexhibitions.html>, as of 17.05.2011; <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/digitalprojects.html>, as of 17.05.2013) features the “generic” *human* icon as recognizably *male* through both arm musculature and adlocutionary gesture.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the VHP webpage *icon* turns out to be a color cryosection through the thorax of the Visible Male (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/photos.html>). Likewise, two application projects masterminded by the NLM, AnatLine<sup>36</sup> and the AnatQuest Project,<sup>37</sup> acknowledge—or do not (the latter)—using images from the VM data set: “AnatLine, in its prototype phase, stores images processed from anatomical structures of the Visible Human male thorax... Pull-down menus allow the user to select the gender and media type of the image. For the purposes of this prototype, only digital color images relating to the male specimen thorax are available (<http://anatquest.nlm.nih.gov/Anatline/GenInfo/index.html>)”.

Equally striking, for me, is the persistence of universalizing cognitive habits whereby the (male) white Western individual is presented to the world as genotypical—which denies racial differences<sup>38</sup> (Moore and Clarke 71, 86) in a country whose infamous “one-drop rule” used to describe racial identity in divisive terms

<sup>33</sup> See also Johnson for a critique of how the minimally invasive surgical simulator replicates the traditional anatomical outlook on the sexes. The surgical simulator uses for its model, at least in part, the Visible Male data set (Johnson 142). Modern simulators have “gendered understandings of the body built into them” (Johnson 144) which “simultaneously represent and reproduce” society’s “underlying values and understandings” (146) as *legitimate*; simulators also reproduce certain medical practices as legitimate (Johnson 145).

<sup>34</sup> “Fly-through” and “melt-through” animation demos of the Visible Male (misnomer: Visible Human!) data are available at and downloadable from <http://collab.nlm.nih.gov/webcastsandvideos/visiblehumanvideos/visiblehumanvideos.html>.

All VHP samples on the NLM project page actually use the VM data set ([http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/visible\\_gallery.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/visible_gallery.html)).

<sup>35</sup> See Harcourt (44) on the iconography of the postures in Vesalius’s *Fabrica*’s illustrations, whose “normative nature is implicit in their antique form,” e.g. the “Marchese del Vasto *en écorché*, which reproduces a common Roman type (the *adlocutio*, a mode of imperial military address) as transmitted through Titian’s portrait of Alfonso d’Avalos, and the ninth figure in the mythological series, which must derive from a model closely related to the so-called Capitoline Antinous.”

<sup>36</sup> AnatLine is “a prototype system consisting of an anatomical image database and an online browser developed at the National Library of Medicine” (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/>).

<sup>37</sup> The overall goal of the AnatQuest Project (<http://anatquest.nlm.nih.gov/Anatline/BodyMap4/BodyMap.html>) is “to explore and implement new visually and compelling ways to bring anatomic images from the Visible Human dataset to the general public” (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/>), yet its images come, if unacknowledged, from the VM.

<sup>38</sup> Curtis, Waldby (“Virtual Anatomy”), and Johnson fail to broach the import of racial and social intersectionality implicit in the choice of cadavers for scientific constructions of the “human”—in fact, Caucasian male—specimen.

of blood “purity” and, once enforced as law in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, effectively denied civic rights to the emancipated black. And this is just to look at things in black and white, race-wise. As Moore and Clarke (62) cogently argue, digital dissemination of distinctly white Western body models and cognitive technologies of “human” anatomy ultimately *globalizes* Western bodies and epistemology.<sup>39</sup>

Phenotypically too, the VHP is deeply flawed in its presentation of Jernigan’s digitized body scans as the Visible Male, considering not just the information loss characteristic of the entire project through the cutting of the cryogenized cadavers into four blocks each to be fitted into the sectioning machine (Waldby, VHP 14). The VM data set is inherently incomplete and thus scientifically misleading since Jernigan undertook several organ removal operations during his lifetime, most illuminating for the project being not tooth extraction or appendicectomy but the surgical removal of one testicle. The typical man—young, healthy, white and Western—is but a “half” man, considering the paramount importance attached to the *visible* male sexual organs from anatomical representation to Freud’s psychoanalysis! As Waldby (VHP 17-18) and Moore and Clarke (78) wryly note, the detail has passed conveniently hushed, as has the high resolution Visible Female data set because of the woman’s post-menopausal condition—post-procreative, hence post-normal!

Nor is the VHP an exceptional case of how the hegemonic discourse of patriarchy shapes human anatomical identities scientifically. Moore and Clarke’s analysis of cyberanatomies reveals “re-media-ted”<sup>40</sup> continuities [of information in the genital anatomies project presented in digitized form, e.g. on CD-ROMs and the Internet] with older visual cultures” (61) which stress *heteronormativity*, “the female body as reproductive and not sexual, and the biomedical expert as the proper and dominant mediator between humans and their own bodies” (87). That such expert mediation is not exclusively a blessing is suggested by Emily Martin’s saddening conclusion to the comparative analysis of destruction-regeneration processes—the stomach and uterus lining, and egg and sperm production—as described in anatomy books in the 1980s (“Medical Metaphors”), on the one hand, and educated vs. undereducated women’s description of menstruation (“Science and Women’s Bodies”; “Medical Metaphors”), on the other: masculinist science inoculates us from an early school age with positive images about male anatomy and physiology (with inherently “masculine” traits) and negative images about the female ones, as well as being silent over similarities of a “feminine” sort which would jeopardize the androcentric heteronormative model of “human” identity (see also Hird 36-43).

By way of verification of the gender and racial identity bias—the traditionally concealed crisis of identity representation—in contemporary discursive practices of human anatomy, let us consider a series of works by British artist Marc Quinn. Most clearly related to the VHP, both for the historical connection between the two human projects and for their view of identity, is the genomic portrait of the scientist who led the British arm of the Human Genome Project research team. *Sir John Edward Sulston* (2001) was

<sup>39</sup> True, *ADAM Interactive Anatomy* (1997), an application of the VHP, purports to be inclusive of difference beyond the fairly generous Language Lexicon options: it accommodates racial difference through the skin color, facial characteristics and hair options for the body model used in the session—Black, Asian, olive. Nonetheless, such racial adaptation fails to alter the body too, “thus suggesting that race is only surface” (Moore and Clarke 71). A similar skin tone option (alone) features in *ADAM: The Nine Month Miracle* (73).

<sup>40</sup> Moore and Clarke’s “re-media-tion” draws on Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin’s concept; for the latter, *remediation* describes “the ways in which any historically situated media always re-mediate prior media, and thus also re-mediate prior modes of social and cultural modes of communication” (Thacker, *Biomedica* 8). Any mediation of the body, in this sense, renders the body the object of communication; however, with Thacker (9), I am wary of Bolter and Grusin’s ontological distinction between body and technology. For Thacker (10), “the body as a remediation also means that it is caught ... between the poles of immediacy [i.e. the phenomenological concept of ‘embodiment’ or lived experience] and hypermediacy [i.e. framed by sets of knowledge on the body, including medicine and science]”; “the zone of the body-as-media” is *perhaps* lodged within the “incommensurability between ... embodiment and technoscience.”



commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery, London, with the support of the Wellcome Trust Sanger Centre, Cambridge, to celebrate would-be Nobel laureate (2002) Sir John Sulston, the center's founder-director (1992-2000) and an outstanding geneticist. The NPG website notes that Sulston's "is the first entirely conceptual portrait to be acquired by the Gallery" (<http://www.npg.org.uk/about/press/genomic-portrait.php>). What *concept* underlies the portrait, then? Here is the "sitter":

The portrait is the result of a standard laboratory procedure, transposed into the setting of the Gallery. Does this change of viewpoint alter our perception of the object, and of the techniques that gave rise to it? The portrait contains a small fraction of my DNA, so it's only a detail of the whole, though there is ample information to identify me. Each spot in the portrait is a colony grown from a single bacterial cell containing a segment of my DNA. (John Sulston, <http://www.npg.org.uk/about/press/genomic-portrait.php>)

And here is the artist:

What I like about my portrait of John Sulston is that, even though in artistic terms it seems to be abstract, in fact it is the most realist portrait in the Portrait Gallery since it carries the actual instructions that led to the creation of John. It is a portrait of his parents, and every ancestor he ever had back to the beginning of Life in the universe. I like that it makes the invisible visible, and brings the inside out. With the mapping of the Human Genome, ... we are the first generation to be able to see the instructions for making ourselves. This is a portrait of our shared inheritance and communality as well as of one person. (Marc Quinn, <http://www.npg.org.uk/about/press/genomic-portrait.php>)

Even more to the point I'm making in this paper is Dr Charles Saumarez Smith, director of the National Portrait Gallery:

One of the great strengths of this work is that it asks the questions "What is a portrait?" just as, in considering DNA and the Human Genome, one is faced with the question "What is a person?" Marc's portrait of John Sulston represents the ultimate integration of the sitter's identity, in a genetic sense, with the material of the portrait, allowing for a discussion regarding conceptual art practices. (<http://www.npg.org.uk/about/press/genomic-portrait.php>)

Indeed, what's (in) a portrait? The NPG website fails to mention the DNA source, even as the Gallery's director sounds so enthusiastic ontologico-epistemologically about this portrait. Not a fallen hair, nor nail clippings but Sulston's sperm (van Rijnsingen 188) has supplied the DNA (allegedly, the alpha and omega of one's identity<sup>41</sup>)—superb, though *invisible*, reinforcement of what constitutes one's gender/human identity through genetic material! The portrait thus participates, perhaps unwittingly, in a compensatory move able to restore the Visible Male's half-manhood to full potency and all-human representativity. Had Marie Skłodowska-Curie (1864-1934) been living now, would her pioneering research on radioactivity, with its medical applications studied first under her direction, and ensuing two Nobel Prizes have earned her a *genomic* portrait and, if so, would it have been displayed in a portrait gallery,<sup>42</sup> let alone having a DNA source comparable to Sulston's?

Indeed, Sulston's is not the only genomic portrait by Marc Quinn. The artist has also created the *DNA Garden* (2002), a set of 77 plates of cloned DNA coming from 75 plants and 2 humans (male and female?),<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> See Hird (43-9) for a critique of the excessive controlling power bestowed on genes by mainstream scientific and media accounts, blurred as their vision has been by traditional gendered assumptions.

<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Marie Curie, the first female professor at the Sorbonne, is interred in the Panthéon, yet only since 1995!

<sup>43</sup> *DNA Garden* (2002) aims, in Quinn's own words, at a "re-enactment" of the Garden of Eden Genesis myth through the single-cell central image of Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1504) as the origin of life (Anker et al. 292).



and *Family Portrait (Cloned DNA)* (2002), whose DNA comes from all four members of Quinn's family. Nor is DNA the only organic "pigment" ever used by Quinn to probe artistically "what it means to materially exist in the world" (Quinn, <http://www.marcquinn.com/exhibitions>). In 1991, Quinn started his *Self* series—life-size models of his head cast in his own frozen blood (encased in a Perspex display window fitted with refrigeration equipment). The 1991 version has been purchased by Saatchi; the 2001 is now in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Yet the series has gradually moved away from organic experiments. In 2008, Quinn created *Carbon Cycle*, a chromed bronze *memento mori* (literalizing the pushing-up-the-daisies idiom!) that aesthetically hearkens back to the Green Man motif in its disgorging-of-vegetation version; in 2009 he cast *Frozen Head*, an 18-carat gold version of the 1991 *Self* that is rather consistent with traditional masculinist ambitions of immortal fame!

Beyond the ego gratifying self-portrait series which use oneself<sup>44</sup> for raw matter, not just as the "sitter," Marc Quinn has also created sculptures of people with disabilities. The idea struck him on a visit to the British Museum, on seeing the damaged ancient sculptures on display. Hence he sculpted the 2000 series, whose *Alison Lapper and Parys*, *Helen Smith*, *Catherine Long*, *Alexandra Westmoquette*, *Selma Mustajbasic*, and *Stuart Penn* are white marble pieces which follow the ancient canon of classical (female) beauty and (male) dynamism, despite the sitter's infirmity. Nevertheless, *Tom Yendell* transgresses canonical constraints of harmony: the male sitter's body looks positively grotesque in Bakhtin's sense, as does the pregnant body of the phocomelic artist-sitter in *Alison Lapper (8 Months)*, a marble statue that once occupied the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square (Sept. 2005-Oct. 2007). Indeed, the very names of the disabled sitters suggest that Quinn has moved beyond ethnic homogeneity, even as the racial unmarkedness of the sitters' faces, at least in the official photos on the artist's website, belies it.

Just as ambiguous a treatment of inherited ideas of gender identity and roles receives Quinn's Sphinx series (2005-2007) featuring British model Kate Moss. The white painted bronzes challenge as much the tradition of marble sculpture as that of what white women can be represented to do in high art, even as the contorted bodily poses are appended names alluding to Greek mythology—ultimately hegemonic white culture at its most patriarchal. From *Sphinx (Siren)*, 2005—reduplicated as *Sphinx (Laocoon)*, 2006, and the 18-carat gold miniature *Siren* (2008)—to *Sphinx (Caryatid)*, 2006—itself reduplicated as *Microcosmos (Endless Column)*, 2008—and from *Sphinx (Venus)*, 2006 to *Sphinx (Victory)*, 2006, *Sphinx (Fortuna)*, 2006, and *Sphinx (Nike)*, 2007, the series shows Kate Moss (b. 1974) as classically young, beautiful and serene, yet performing her "artistic" identity—as envisioned by Quinn—through an acrobatics never associated with "respectable" white women or canonical art, and sometimes virtually impossible in physical terms, e.g. the Siren and Venus postures.

To sum up my overview of the Marc Quinn works, can we confidently state that his impressive palette of sitters and postures has successfully challenged the traditional identitary game which posits the white male as the paragon of humanity? Quinn has certainly not been complacently/ normatively masculine in his choice of subject matter and aesthetic models or techniques. Nonetheless, the abiding sense of an inherently masculine prescription of identity haunts these works, especially apparent in the clash between title and composition in the Sphinx series and in Sulston's genomic portrait. And the whiteness of marble or of painted bronze is a tell-tale sign of the whiteness of "humanity." Quinn's works still gesture towards the Western crisis of gender and race identity in representation.

<sup>44</sup>*Lucas* (2001; Tate Liverpool) is a sculpture of Quinn's son's head made from the baby's placenta and umbilical cord (requiring refrigeration equipment).

## Conclusions

My comparative analysis suggests that these postmodern works' attempt, if not agenda, *to restore her in the story*—to recover *herstory* from the shards of *history* after the advent of postmodern suspicion—through gender iconicity, is neither fully successful nor methodologically flawless. If, as both H. R. Jauss and feminist writers argue, meaning is not inherent in the artwork or image but is constructed—partially and provisionally, as Elisabeth Grosz cautions (qtd. in Meskimmon 384)—through the “reader’s” interaction with the work, then *Agora* and The Visible Human Project may as much cater for the feminist concern to recover women in history and scientific representation, as they undermine such politico-epistemological agenda by reinforcing traditional malestream identity stereotypes which elide men with humankind (the VHP) or displace Western conceptualizations of self and other from male vs. female to Western vs. non-Western and civilized/rational/enlightened vs. barbaric/irrational/narrow-minded<sup>45</sup> (*Agora*). Such interpretative interaction with remediated gender icons, moreover, is necessarily framed by Western socio-cultural presuppositions undergirded by the current politics of representation (both in a particular medium and at large) and resonates with larger political concerns within the social. In the case of *Agora*, the political context and spectatorial familiarity with related films further complicate *herstory* through its embedding within a heterological discourse whose own *history* extols hegemonic Euro-American phallogocentrism. In the case of the VHP, the politically correct explicit agenda of the US National Library of Medicine is belied at every turn in both internal and external applications that draw upon the centuries-old equation of male with human in the normative representation of the body.

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<sup>45</sup> For such conceptual overlaps, see Cixous (63-4).

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## Re-scripting in a Postmodern Manner Shakespeare's Plays: Intersemiotic Translations

**Abstract:** The understanding of femininity in postmodernism allows for new approaches in the theater of Shakespeare. Cinematography has offered two examples: in 1996 with Baz Luhrmann's version of *Romeo and Juliet* (*Romeo + Juliet*) and in 2005 with the BBC series, *Shakespeare RE-Told, The Taming of the Shrew*, directed by David Richards. Both movies mix femininity with the will to power, but in a system informed by humor, kitsch and carnival. The conflict between sexes and families becomes an opportunity to assemble a satirical show. Shakespeare maintains his position of a transcultural author, above and beyond every fashion.

**Keywords:** cinematography, conflict, femininity, kitsch, politics

**Motto:** "Sergius: give me the man who will defy to the death any power on earth or in heaven that sets itself up against his own will and conscience: he alone is the brave man" (Shaw 74).

### Introduction: Conceptual Outline

For many of us William Shakespeare has remained the most vivid author during these four centuries since his death. Such a posthumous vivacity cannot be explained solely by the quality of his work. In terms of communication with our contemporaneity, the Renaissance and Baroque writer is not the friendliest example. Not only that the language he used moved to other meanings and collocations, but even the style of his discourse, especially his verbosity, became points of interests only for scholars, snobs and elite. The explanation for Shakespeare's message being so well-preserved lies in his capacity of creating myths, legends and archetypes. These types of creations are appealing to those involved in intersemiotic translations.

As Gregory Rabassa remarks: "When we translate a curse, we must look to the feelings behind it and not the words that go make it up" (Rabassa 3). The writers, the stage directors, the painters, the graphic designers and the composers who realize intersemiotic translations, or programmatic works of art, as they are named, transfer a system of signs into a different one: letters into sounds, letters into images, or into sounds. Of course, the reverse way is possible, too. They trigger a "process of negotiation between texts and between cultures" and approach "translation as an act of creative writing" (Bassnett 6). Intersemiotic translations generate polysystems wherein diachronicity is absorbed into synchronicity.

In my paper I shall study the effects of intersemiotic translation on two of Shakespeare's famous plays: *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. The analyzed examples are the correspondent postmodernist movie versions of the plays: David Richard's *The Taming of the Shrew* (2005), after a script by Sally Wainwright, and Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996). The plots of these two plays proved to be challenging for a late stage of postmodernism, when political correctness was held in great esteem. The homosexual vein in *Romeo and Juliet*, together with the anti-Christian actions of otherwise Christian characters, and the misogyny which imbues *The Taming of the Shrew* were delicate themes to be dealt with. My purpose is to highlight and assess the postmodernist changes in script and acting with regard to the two movies already mentioned. These modifications could explain Shakespeare's longevity in a post-industrial and globalized world.

### Means of Making Plausible the Intersemiotic Translation

The film critic Patrick Ivers considers that Shirley Henderson cast as Katherine Minola impersonates a “nasty gorgon, a monstrous tyrant with a tempestuous temper, spitting venom by the vats and in spats with each and every one she meets” (Ivers 1). In the BBC’s TV series *Shakespeare Retold*, Katherine is a Member of Parliament with prospects of becoming the leader of the opposition party. The problem is that she wants to constrain the electorate into voting her. There is no trace of diplomacy, which is weird in the case of a high-ranked politician. The plot may not be very convincing, in terms of verisimilitude, but comedy is not supposed to respect the rules of plausibility.

The scriptwriter and the director realized the intersemiotic translation by resorting to body language, political jargon and updated cityscape. The plot unfolds mainly in London and the characters sometimes speak with a cockney accent. Katherine’s fits of rage are ridiculed by her dwarfish body pitted against the massiveness of the males with whom she works day by day. These males may be massive, but not very masculine. In fact, Katherine behaves in a more manly way than her colleagues. The dominated males blame the situation on Katherine being a 38-year-old spinster. The problem is relegated into the realm of biology which does not suggest that women cannot make great politicians; they have only to contain their anatomical fits and starts. This opinion results in a methodology of civilizing women: marrying and bedding them. Katherine’s high position in the political hierarchy, instead of supporting the cause of women’s rationality, merely further compromises it. To emphasize the negative aspects of spinsterhood and ugliness, the director cast Jaime Murray as Bianca, Katherine’s younger, glamorous sister. The thesis implies, thus, that a beautiful woman has no frustrations and can be the equal of any man. The paradox is perceivable at the professional level: Bianca is a shallow fashion-model attracted to Lucentio, a 19-year-old spoiled Italian, a teenager not a man, while Katherine has a more complex career and falls in love with Petruchio (Rufus Sewell), an imposing and strong-willed male. When questioned about the source of her attraction for Petruchio, Katherine invokes his force. She is powerful and needs somebody more powerful to conquer her. Up to this point, nothing new compared to Shakespeare’s age. But when Petruchio has a crisis of sincerity right before his wedding and gets tipsy in order to have the courage to reveal his true self, things get complicated. Already late for the religious ceremony and without relatives to accompany him, Petruchio boldly enters the church in high heels, net stockings, a kilt, and an open blouse that makes visible his hairy chest. The same drag queen apparition will be notable in Bez Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet*, when Mercutio comes at the Capulets’s ball dressed up like a harlot. If we had not been shown a scared Petruchio in front of the mirror, we could have inferred that his transvestite attire was the first step towards taming Katherine by publicly humiliating her. But “more information often results in less meaning” (Cronin 65). Wainwright deconstructs the original play and opens up many ways of interpretation, no one superior to others.

### “Rewildening” the Old Plots, Tamed by Over-Exposure

Katherine is a Conservative member of the British parliament. Her freshly acquired husband is Lord Crick, the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Charlbury. The suggestion of eccentricity, with the assumed ingredients of kitsch and entertainment, indicate a postmodernist aristocracy, permeated by elements of pop-culture. As the same Michael Cronin puts: “At one level, translation’s *raison d’être* is its implicit ability to universalize” (32). Such a translation of Shakespearean archetypes is indicative of the fact that the protagonists are not antagonists and that the imperialist machoistic invasion of womanhood would be a too-easy and tricky interpretation to take. Petruchio threatens Katherine with a rape, but then blackmails her on account of her impetuous sexual cravings. First, he seduces her, and then he takes the lead. At the end of the movie, we are surprised to see Petruchio in the position of a domestic careful father of three toddlers. He did not want a career for himself, but neither did he block his wife’s professional perspectives. In the postmodern version, Petruchio does not colonialize Katherine. This is possible also on account of their mutual support: Katherine brings



in the marriage money and fame, while Petruchio provides the aristocratic title. Taken separately, both are only simulacra—political demagoguery plus decrepit nobility—, but together they find the way towards a humanized existence. The scriptwriter appears to have won the bet, as “the translated text seems to have a life of its own” (Gentzler 15).

Many critics discredited Sally Wainwright’s achievement using as a peremptory argument the final speech delivered by Katherine in almost word for word Shakespeare’s rendition, although the rest of the movie makes use of a modernized language. The tamed wife condemns her sister, Bianca, for conditioning her marriage with Lucentio on his signing a prenuptial contract. Right in Bianca’s apartment, Katherine praises the husbands’ top-position in family. The scene could easily have been labelled as misogynistic if it had not been for the amusing twists and turns of the movie. Gone are the tortures described in the original version! More or less, the politician tames herself out of love and in the closing montage we see the merry family move into number 10 Downing Street. The intersemiotic translation becomes a full-fledged comedy and ends up successfully, not just with a tepid domestic satisfaction.

### The Semiosis of the Museumified Language

A different type of intersemiotic translation realized Baz Luhrmann in *Romeo + Juliet* (1996). The transfer of signs and cultural conventions into another system results in a flamboyant rendition. Leonardo di Caprio and Claire Danes are the two protagonists in the famous tragedy transferred now in the futuristic urban cityscape of Verona Beach. The antagonistic clans, the Montagues and the Capulets, are now gangs and corporatists at the same time. Their headquarters are figured as two huge steel-and-glass skyscrapers facing each other across a large and crowded boulevard.

The semiotic strategy of the director implies preserving most of the original Early Modern English dialogue. The museumification of the language becomes anachronistic in an emphatic way because of the high-tech environment.

Another notable distortion of the original is the casting of the African-American actor Harold Perrineau as the black, gay man Mercutio. A racial and discriminatory perspective is inaugurated with this movie, as the youngsters in the Capulet gang are figured as Latin, outrageous guys. Mercutio becomes a border figure, mediating between Rome’s white background and Juliet’s Latin one. The Montagues are represented as established corporatists, while the Capulets are on an ascending trend line, but still wearing Hawaiian shirts, massive-gold jewellery and the blonde Juliet seems to be an unexplainable meteorite in their family.

### The Symbolism of Colors

Upon his death, Mercutio curses both inimical families (“A Plague o’ both your houses”—internet reference to the script) and Romeo has the sensation that his new love for Juliet has made him effeminate. There are glimpses of homosexuality in this filmic version of the play. In an unconscious way, Juliet manages what Romeo’s former lover, Rosalind, did not: to dismantle the intimate brotherhood of the Montague boys. The postmodern translation of the borderline sexuality shows the apparition of Mercutio as a drag at the Capulets’ masquerade. In this hypostasis, he taunts Tybalt with sexual jokes (“Oh, and but one word with one of us? Couple it with something. Make it a word and a...a blow”—internet reference to the script) and becomes violent when Tybalt, in his turn, suggests a sexual relationship between Romeo and Mercutio:

TYBALT: Mercutio! Thou art consortest with Romeo?

MERCUTIO: Consort? What does thou make us minstrels? And thou make minstrels of us look to hear nothing of discords. Here’s my fiddlestick. Here’s that shall make you dance! Zounds, Consort!”—(internet reference to the script).

This “connection between aberrant sexuality and dark skin has a long and damaging history in the imperial West dating back at least to Shakespeare himself” (Radel). Caliban, too, was associated with darkness and the sentimental dialogue between Romeo and Juliet is full of references to the extremities of the color spectrum: black and white. Othello himself was demonized on account of his swarthy complexion. Obviously, the dark-skinned characters are associated with uncontrollable basic instincts. In this way “the play signifies differently because of—indeed echoes—our racialized history of desire” (Radel). The symbolism of whiteness is exploited in the case of the two lovers’ dressing-ups: Romeo turns up as an obsolete romantic knight in shiny armor, while Juliet puts on immense fluffy angel wings. Even the elevator inside the Capulets’ house, wherein they have their first kiss is white with golden bars, suggesting a cage that protects their purity. In this chromatic interplay “a black Mercutio might seem to play a salutary role as the example of friendship that transcends race, ethnicity, or culture” (Radel). The possible mediation fails, anyway, because in postmodern times race is internalized. Any white person can be perceived as “black,” the color in itself having no real representation. At a symbolic level, in exchange, colors are attributed depending on contextual interests. The victim gets painted in the color of punishment.

### Conclusions

The same symbolic accentuation of color is to be found in Mercutio’s appearance at the Capulets’s ball in guise of a drag. In the postmodern interpretation of the play Mercutio is victimized or *calibanized avant la lettre*. To calibanize is always close enough to *cannibalize*. And this is an insightful approach as long as we remember that Petruchio was pictured as a drag in the BBC’s 2005 version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. But the “refurbished” Petruchio is successful at the level of the hypocritical and snobbish political elite. Dispatched at the subcultural level of Latino mobsters he would have shared the same fate with the blackened Mercutio. If the “progress in synchronicity is often paralleled by a decline in diachronicity” (Cronin 21), we could infer from these two cases of intersemiotic translation that the postmodern Shakespeare is not as tragic as the Elizabethan one, but surely is more complex.

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## Hippies and Hell's Angels: Two Sides of a *Coin-terculture*

**Abstract:** The decade of the 1960s in America was a period when long-held values and forms decided to abandon an identity based on tradition and separate themselves from mainstream culture through their appearance and lifestyle. This bizarre choice resulted not only in a new self-identity, but also in a new social one. It is in this panorama where a plethora of different groups were participating in what was called the 'counterculture' and crafting an authentic oppositional identity, where the Hippies movement had a privileged position. However, the Hippies were not the only group of people opposed to the ideas of the society they lived in. Another group apparently opposed to the ethos of the America of the moment, and to the Hippies, starts gaining publicity during the same decade. This group is the motorcyclists gang Hell's Angels, not as different from the Hippies as they might seem.

In the following lines, attitudes towards community, sexuality and drugs on the part of both groups will be taken into account in order to draw a parallel between them and demonstrate that they actually were two sides of the same coin.

**Keywords:** Identity, America, Counterculture, Hell's Angels, Hippies

### Introduction

In developmental psychology, J.S. Phinney identified a model of identity formation which is composed of two processes: exploration and commitment. "Exploration is the process of searching for an adequate identity choice among the available options, [and] commitment is the making of a decision to adopt a particular identity option" (Phinney 166).

Individuals may choose to develop an identity commitment which would be not supported by their community's expectations. This countercultural option involves a collection of attitudes, tendencies, and ideals that are different from the culturally desired. Here I would like to explore how identity is constructed, in sociological terms, in the America of the Sixties, a moment when the paradigm of American identity changed due to the economic and social development, taking especially into account two countercultural movements—apparently opposed—which arose at the same time.

An appropriate and objective definition of the term 'counterculture' to use as a starting point would be the one provided by the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*: "[A] way of life and set of ideas that are opposed to those accepted by most of society; a group of people who share a way of life and such ideas" (40). It is thus determined that a single concept can be used to refer to a type of culture alternative to the mainstream in which values and lifestyles are subverted, and to the people belonging to it. This second point is perhaps less precise because even from the most basic perspective, the disparity among all the groups considered to be countercultural is easily recognizable.

I would like to examine here the possibilities of drawing a parallel between the Hippie movement and the motorcycle club Hell's Angels. To this end, several significant points, such as the genetic-historical analysis of their evolution will be taken into account, placing them within their relevant context to finally answer the following question: Were these two groups a project or a symptom? In order to get to this, I consider it opportune to make use of theoretical and critical resources on the Hippie movement and put them together with a different type of narration as the New Journalism—and, more specifically, its subgenre known as 'Gonzo Journalism'—is. This style of writing, which "consists of the fusion of reality and stark fantasy in a way that amuses the author and outrages his audience" (Filitreau qtd. in Hirst 4), is

the one which the American journalist Hunter S. Thompson puts into practice in his book *Hell's Angels: A Strangle and Terrible Saga* (1966). The choice of this type of journalistic literature is far from arbitrary, since this movement was developed along with other anti-establishment movements and it was, to a significant degree, a result of them. Evidence of this is reflected in the first pages of one of the first works dedicated to this particular type of press, which states that "[t]he underground press in America was created to reflect and shape the life style of Hippies, dropouts and all those alienated from the mainstream of American experience" (Glessing 3).

That is, what we have is a brand-new type of journalism whose information goes beyond the official American dogma of that time. A type of journalism that shows other communities and even nations that were precisely there, *underground*.

### Analysis

It was in the summer of 1967 when the Hippies constituted themselves as a new group in a society that was fenced by the ever-increasing emergence of groups, and political and radical movements. "[They] made a lasting impact on the ethos of America... [and] saw themselves as the people... who would build a new society on the ruins of the old, corrupt one" (Miller 3). The Hippies supported a lifestyle opposed to the one considered legitimate by the American middle class. They wanted to demonstrate that the values and regulatory orders around which the American society was rooted were far from immutable. But what are the origins of this defiance? Micah L. Issitt states that there is no tangible answer to that question because "[t]he development of any cultural group is the result of numerous influences converging within the framework of the broader environment" (1). The Hippies movement emerged in response to the mainstream of the 1950s and 1960s, the Beat Generation being their direct ancestors. Both groups shared the desire to avoid the costumes and lifestyle of the ruling middle class, but they also firmly rejected any ties to any political commitment. They revered contemplation over action—initially, at least—"Both were drawn to the more mystical variants of oriental religion and mysticism... both were heavily involved with drug use. Both adopted the habit and style of those great American archetypes, the hobo, the burn, the hitch-hiker on the 'open road' of American life" (Hall 160).

There were so many similarities between them that Lawrence Ferlinghetti referred to the Beats as "Stone Age Hippies" (Ferlinghetti qtd. in Issitt 2). The Beat Generation rebelled against a more and more repressive, conservative and conformist society, the fruit of the ideological confrontation that the Cold War brought about in the America of Eisenhower, causing the most amazing progress in the American literature through a new approach to it and a bohemian lifestyle. Prior to their formation in the so-called "Summer of Love" in 1967, this philosophy made the Hippies take the Beats over and, somehow, born from their ashes.

And what do the Hell's Angels have to do in this whole panorama of cultural revolution, of love celebration and flowers in the hair? How can they be categorized as a counterculture? These outlaw motorcyclists already had history during the 1950s and 1960s, but it was not until the mid-60s that they achieved notoriety.

Little is known about this group, except that they were "outlaw motorcyclists wearing chains, shades and greasy Levis... [with] long hair in the wind, beards and bandanas flapping, earrings, ...chain whips, swastikas and stripped-down Harleys" (Thompson 11).

At the end of World War II, not all the American soldiers who returned shared the optimism that henceforth the opportunities presented to them would help them achieve the "American Dream." Some of them were neither prepared nor willing to accept the future of responsibilities that a permanent job and a family would suppose, so they decided to pursue freedom in the saddle of their motorcycles. "They didn't want order, but privacy... They wanted more action, and one of the ways to look for it was on a big motorcycle" (Thompson 81). In the late 1940s, motorcycle clubs had become very trendy. Among them

were The Greedy Bastards, who were the first to be involved in an incident in a motorcycle event in Hollister, California. A year after, former members of The Greedy Bastards decided to choose a new identity and started the Hell's Angels in Fontana, California. It is speculated that the real origin of this name comes from a Flying Tigers squadron that battled in China during World War I, although even from within, no one can point exactly to its origins.

The members of these motorcycle clubs saw in them a way of life, and considered the rest of the members to be their family. And it is here where a sense of brotherhood arises, which brings them together, which they are proud to uphold, and which is curiously provided by their motorcycles. This sense of community is anthropological to the American society, and therefore also common to the Beat and Hippie movements mentioned above.

Unity was part of the philosophy of the Hippie lifestyle. Unlike the communities deliberately created, they represented "an attempt to live the Hippie ethical ideals of liberated sex, use of dope, love and sharing" (Miller 87). Nor was it their aim to cluster rigidly, which partly answers that philosophy of freedom. They looked for a new way of life "[whose] end was affinity, communication [and] humans caring for each other" (Miller 90), which transcended the social control of the moment and represented the vehicle to a new society. The proliferation of these communes seems to correspond to the also progressive growth of rock festivals, "short-lived communes of a sort" (Miller 88). The festival that, in this sense, inspired the experimentation of collective life was Woodstock, first held in the town of Bethel, New York, in 1969. In this regard, Miller takes a quote of an article "[from] the underground press... [which] stressed the feeling of unity: 'Everyone needed other's people help, and everyone was ready to share what he had as many ways as it could be split up. Everyone could feel the good vibrations'" (89).

This feeling of instant community is also reflected by Thompson in *Hell's Angels*. In the episode of Bass Lake, Hunter narrates this attitude of the Angels in relation to the distribution of beer: "To them it was just as natural for me to have their beer as for them to have mine... Their working ethic is more on the order of 'He who has, shares'" (Thompson 178-179). This relationship of brotherhood was stipulated by Ralph 'Sonny' Barger, founder of the Oakland chapter, during the 1960s. Apart from making an oath of protection, all those wishing to become a Hell's Angel had to take an oath swearing allegiance to what they call 'their colors,' which they would defend to death: the winged death's-head patch on the back of their leather vests or jackets, along with other insignia, as the rectangular patch identifying their respective chapter locations, different types of Luftwaffe insignia and reproductions of German Iron Crosses. The diamond-shaped one-percenter patch—displaying '1%'—was also considered a symbol of honor, representing the percentage of society that did not match and did not care about it, an elite with bad name. The brotherhood that Barger proclaimed is explicitly evident in the chapter on the death and funeral of Mother Miles, an Angel who died on the road. The Hell's Angels, as if they were on a tour, met to say the last goodbye and, above all, to make sure that Mother Miles was buried as a Hell's Angel, with his colors.

The Hell's Angels, as the Hippies did at Woodstock, deliberately met in Bass Lake to celebrate the Fourth of July, celebration they used to celebrate every year going on a tour. Just as the Hippies claimed peace and love as a way of life in Woodstock, a tour meant a celebration to the Angels. It served as a kind of demonstration of who were really on their side. The tour also implied, as Thompson narrates, an opportunity to drive mad and cause fear among the population whilst their journey lasted. Why was that? The population they wanted to scare was part of the society who had turned their back on them, "[the] establishment culture—which [was] after all, in the driver's seat—[and was] not willing to tolerate [any] deviant behavior" (Miller 9).

It is interesting that the middle class which the Hippies wanted to rebel against, and whose conventions tried to invert and subvert, was actually the environment where they had come from. As dissidents of that culture, the children of a class of well-off citizens sought to identify themselves and



showed support to those most disadvantaged in society. That is why the Hippie dropped out from his middle-class neighborhood and purposely assumed his role in poverty.

The mythical image of marginality that the Hell's Angels showcase is quite far from the Hippies' precepts of solidarity with the underprivileged. On the contrary, the Hell's Angels were not part of a social structure that could afford to choose a way of life. They were a lower-class phenomenon, "they [came] from people who never owned anything at all, not even a car" (Thompson 196). They were a result of a social breakdown, in sociological terms, and not a temporary phenomenon of imminent cessation. In the words of 'Sonny' Barger, they maintained a conformist attitude towards life and a philosophy of adaptation to the standards that the society had indirectly imposed on them. For the society in which they lived, the Angels were losers "[who had to capitalize on whatever [they had] left, and [couldn't] afford to admit... that every day of [their lives took them] farther down a blind alley" (Thompson 326). Therefore, this behavior and lifestyle have been labelled as 'deviant' because of not being subject to the rules and expectations that the mainstream society considered respectable.

This fightback was because, in the words of a Hippie, that society "sense[d] a threat to [its] continued... dominance" (Miller 9). And they were absolutely right. Both Hippies and Hell's Angels challenged these societies through the imposition of fear. Although it was the Angels who more explicitly performed this 'task,' in the novel *The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test*, also closely related to the New Journalism, Tom Wolfe demonstrates a similar attitude by the psychedelic group led by Ken Kesey, the Merry Pranksters:

They, [those who conform the establishment culture], hate anything that's not right for their way of living... [this is why we like to blow their minds] ... When you walk into a place where people can see you, you want to look as repulsive and repugnant as possible... We're bastards to the world and they're bastards to us... We fight society and society fights us. (Thompson 148-149)

They, [the Pranksters] took a test run up into northern California and right away this wild-looking thing with the wild-looking people was great for stirring up consternation and vague befuddling resentment among the citizens. The Pranksters were now out among them, and it was exhilarating—look at the mothers staring! —and there was going to be holy terror in the land. (Wolfe 66).

But they were not the Hippies, but the Angels who became a media circus from the early 1960s, when the Angels already had six sections around the coast of California, for having followed that philosophy. In 1963, they had been responsible of an incident similar to the Greedy Bastards' in Hollister. The Hell's Angels, with the aim of raising money to send home the remains of an Angel who had been run over and killed on the road, invaded, according to various testimonies, Porterville. A year later, they were fully in the public eye after being accused of having raped two minors in Monterey. The news became a national security issue. Although the defendants were acquitted in a trial that took place a year later, the *Lynch Report*, drafted by the California Attorney General, put the Hell's Angels in the spotlight of both citizens and media. Thompson, yet naive, finishes his second chapter wondering, after all, what kind of threat was that the Angels represented. Due to the fame they had achieved after 1965, many of the crimes attributed to them were created, as if it was a journalistic farce: fights, rapes and 'motorized crimes' that rarely showed plausible reasoning. Thus, the presence of the Hell's Angels in any American community to which they were foreign, implied panic for its citizens, who often sought support among them to defeat this gang of ruffians who swept their towns, their establishments and raped their women, and posed a serious problem to the police, who was forced to set up checkpoints and try to divert the path of the Angels as far as possible, and to arrest anyone they thought likely to cause any public disorder.

The Angels represent, on the other hand, extreme positions. For them, there was no offense without defense—even within the organization—, and many of them admitted having based part of their lives on violent episodes. But it is also true that they claim they never started an argument. 'Sonny' Barger puts it

this way: "There would be no trouble if we [were] left alone. The only violence is when people go after us. Couple of Angels will go into a bar and a few guys getting drunk up will start a fight, but we get blamed for it" (Thompson 256).

The fact remains that violence defines to a great extent the Angels' behavior, and Thompson accurately reflects the low-life of the motorcyclists gang.

Conversely, the Hippies were the generation of love, peace, optimism, the 'flower power.' To them, love was opposed to violence, which they considered as "the product of a corrupt society and was one of that society's dead ends" (Miller 105). Beyond their desires of celebrating a free love equivalent to sexual permissiveness, to which we will return later, the Hippies advocated a kind of love for all mankind in an era when personal relationships were almost accidental and in many cases of convenience. It is for this reason that the Hippies got immersed in political activism with the conviction that love as ethical conviction "[could] change and create ...[could] move and ...[could] shake moral, political, ethical, economic, and spiritual consciousness" (Miller 105). To them, love was the only solution to all problems, "if truly practiced, it would reform the world" (Miller 105). Love as it was conceived by the Hippies resulted on the emergence of other groups as the Yippies or the Diggers, who celebrated love through open expressiveness, through spontaneous performances—hence the importance of the *here* and *now*—and gestures of free love and solidarity that symbolized passive resistance to all structures legitimized by violence as war or police brutality. Their mode of activism was also passive. The Hippies did not seek conquest but transcendence, thus beginning their confrontation towards violence by going to the streets and promoting mass demonstrations and marches for freedom. Miller believes that this stream change which passed from the rejection of any political commitment to the adoption of activism as a way of life takes place because "the Hippie lifestyle had political implications; persons living on the boundary of what was socially acceptable could not always avoid political reality, no matter what they thought of it" (107).

The Hippies, as the Beat Generation and the New Left had been before, were prototypes of... "an expressive social movement" (Hall 164), what prompted the development of a revolution instead of imposing it.

One of the most important clashes between the Hippies and the Hell's Angels can be appreciated in this regard, politically. The collective point of view of the Angels had always been fascist. Like the rest of outlaw motorcyclist groups, the Angels were anti-communist, and, politically, they "[were] limited to the same kind of retrograde patriotism that motivates the John Birch Society, the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party" (Thompson 315).

Along Thompson's narration, several episodes in which it is questioned whether the Angels have a Nazi ideology or not are found. Sometimes, members of the gang insist that they just carry the insignia of the swastika to cause fear; it is simply a careless symbol that they have bought by chance. Ralph 'Sonny' Barger is the only one who, in *Hell's Angels*, talks about it and admits the admiration they feel—not only him, he generalizes—for Germany, that the Angels who carry that kind of insignia do it because they want to frighten, to be left alone. They, Barger says, belong to the ideology of 'individualism' that was first promulgated in the Declaration of Independence.

Hence this antonym regarding political ideology between the Hippies and the Hell's Angels starts to become apparent at the moment that both groups, hitherto unrelated to any kind of political activism, begin to express their ideas about the Vietnam War. The Hell's Angels, instead of promoting or joining such protests in which young students condemned the war machine Vietnam meant, decided to do the opposite and attack protests. They 'counter protested' against Vietnam wanting to express their patriotism this way (not a casual fact, since it has its origins in the category of veterans of some Angels who fought in World War II as mentioned above, or even in the Korean War), to the point that Barger wrote a letter to President Johnson to offer the Angels' support in the war, and offered to swell its lists of soldiers. They

never received an answer, but it was one more event to promote and advertise the group. Now they appeared on TV and even discovered that they could be summoned for press conferences.

It did not take them long to realize their differences compared to the rest of radicals. The other groups were constructive, but they were not. The drug culture, with which the Angels had joined more than once, had demanded them an alliance and they had disappointed it. Yes, there was a time when Hippies, hipsters and Hell's Angels had come to join and even fraternized in a common interest: the drug. To the Angels, it was a completely new dimension; it was something they were not used to. Their drug consumption was limited to marijuana. This was due to the fact that an Angel should respect the rule of not using (or giving up) any substance that could make him unable to ride his motorcycle. The aforementioned 'alliance' came from Ken Kesey, the only positive connection the Angels made from the intellectual circle of Berkeley, to which the Hell's Angels seemed so interesting as a phenomenon, and with which so less they had in common. Kesey invited the Hell's Angels to an 'acid test party' he was promoting together with the Merry Pranksters with the only purpose that the guests could experience different states of consciousness expansion. The psychedelic movement led by Kesey shared the relevance of the dimension of 'here and now' defended by the Hippies. The Hell's Angels consumed drugs and alcohol not with the aim of getting that state of consciousness expansion, but with the will of staying awake as much as their tours lasted. Unlike the substances they had consumed before taking LSD, this new drug submerged them in a state of peace almost unknown to them.

To the Hippies, the drug, 'dope' had a triple dimension: "dope is fun; dope is revolutionary; ... dope is good for your body and soul" (Miller 29).

The Hippies established this difference for a clear reason: "Middle class society [had] its own tolerated drugs—alcohol and tobacco—... Thus drug-taking as an element in the Hippie way of life [had] the added attraction of demonstrating how artificial [were] the established boundaries to that moral code which society [took] to be 'right' and 'natural'" (Hall 156).

To carry out experiences that open the 'doors of perception,' the Hippies designed what is known as 'dope churches,' since their aim was to use drugs for ritual, spiritual discoveries. Timothy Leary, promoter of these experiments, wanted his new 'religion' to stay away from other social structures, so he founded the League for Spiritual Discovery in defense of these practices, looking even to legalizing drugs for spiritual purposes.

Having fun was also part of the drug culture, which lived in hedonistic terms an ethics of pleasure not shared by all of society. The basic idea that pleasure was not attentive to the moral, but it was good, was also defended by Timothy Leary, who felt that the "hedonistic gap... was the real problem of the world [then]" (Miller 118). Yet another benefit that the drug conferred the Hippies in terms of fun, pleasure seeking, was the intensification of sexual pleasure that drug produced, because it helped them expand their erotic horizons. Leary summed up this experience as follows: "The key energy in our revolution is erotic... The sexual revolution is not just part of the atmosphere of freedom that is generating within the kids. I think it is the center of it. The reason the psychedelic drugs, particularly marijuana, are so popular, is because they turn on the body. I'll say flatly that the meaning and central issue of the psychedelic experiences is erotic exhilaration" (Miller 67).

Returning to the subject of love celebrated by the Hippies, it was understood as love that involved sexual permissiveness. It did not have to do with forcing or compelling anyone to take part in a sexual activity that they did not want, but to enhance no repression against such impulses. This extension of the concept love-sex, reached the point that certain minority defended the place of the orgy, of organized and spontaneous sex among multiple partners. This idea had led to the previous generation, the Beat, to reshuffle different possibilities for this in terms of family structure. Ginsberg wrote: "I would see different kinds of family structure. Couple of girls with one guy, couple of guys with one girl, 20 girls, 20 guys, all making it if they want" (Ginsberg qtd. in Miller 93).

The counterculture, on the other hand, did not bind the married couples to exchange relations. They did not see why sex could not be shared, because in their opinion it was a practice that united the individual more with his wife or family. Everything that supposed chastity or adultery, derived in jealousy.

Also present was the defense of homosexuality, which was based on the right of a person “to free sexual choice” (Miller 57). Within this ethics of sex, there were also society members who disagreed, mostly women, to see it as a project focused on the satisfaction of male sexual desires. For some women “free sexuality... carrie[d] with it an unwarranted domination by the man, of the woman, which injures both” (Miller 67). The argument was simple: How many men were there who treated their partner as a person and not as a piece of meat? Linked to this, the alternative of homosexuality among women started to show up. The movements for the liberation of women were beginning to emerge, both through the underground press and the rest of society. All this was new in the Hippie panorama: the previous generation could not enjoy the same privileges. However much revolution, the Beat posed, it is notoriously difficult to find a female figure within that movement that had been at the level of such great figures as Ginsberg or Kerouac. In the introduction to *Girls Who Wore Black: Women Writing the Beat Generation*, Ann Charters asks this question: “[H]ad the Beat men encouraged the writing of the women who were involved with them in this literary movement?” (ix), which she answers below from the perspective of feminist criticism, and says no: the Beat-men failed to respond to the intellectual needs of these women who, obeying much in the same conformist way than the previous generation had done, remained isolated, dressed in black, watching the men of their generation, with whom they shared concerns and desires, triumph, leaving them in the shade. Joyce Johnson, one of the *minor characters* that shaped that generation, defines it from a more positive perspective: “If you want to understand Beat women, call us transitional—a bridge to the next generation” (Johnson qtd. in Knight 1). Although compared to the role that women represented in the field of the Hell’s Angels, these women, and even those of the previous generation, were privileged.

Little evidence exists along Thompson’s narration of love feelings of the Angels towards a particular woman. The only special relationship that they seem to have is the one they have with their motorcycles, and the only explicit references to women are those Thompson makes in the middle of the book: “There were about fifty girls in camp, but nearly all were ‘old ladies’—not to be confused, except at serious risk, with ‘mamas’ or ‘strange chicks.’ An old lady can be a steady girlfriend, a wife or even some bawdy hustler that one of the outlaws has taken a liking to” (216).

For the Hell’s Angels there are thus three types of women that basically differ in their sexual availability. The category of ‘mama’ is the most degrading of all. Thompson makes it clear that in any meeting of the Angels there were ‘mamas’ and that they understood that what was expected of them was total availability “at any time, in any way, to any Angel, friend or favored guest—individually or otherwise” (217). That is, they were common property and could be sold or auctioned. But this role of “piece of meat” women Hippies denounced did not seem to worry them at all. They knew their role and accepted it without question. The primacy of male sexual pleasure is also evident among the Angels, and it is manifested in numerous occasions as sexual abuse, which Thompson reflects very explicitly. It is worth noting in this regard the episode in which several Angels have sex with a woman who is clearly drunk and had previously offered herself for it, at a party they met with Kesey and the Pranksters and that Wolfe described in a similar way, almost using the same words in *The Kool Electric Acid Acid Test*. Thompson, not so naive at this point, relates it (not explicitly) to an episode of gang rape that the Angels had often been accused of. They declare it in the book and do not discard that there could have been an episode like that when the ‘mama’ that had previously offered herself, regrets having done so.

## Conclusion

As countercultural movements, both Hippies and Hell's Angels shared common facts: their genesis occurred as a rebellion against the generation that preceded them. But, to what extent can we ensure that they shared the same ethics of drugs, sex and sense of community? The Hippies were a movement which had turned their back on the society, and the Angels were a gang on which the society had turned its back. The Hippies proclaimed love, equality, the need of opening to spirituality, to perception. The Hippies manifested themselves as a project; they were the children of a transition, they sought to face the conflict, the system, to challenge it and make socio-economic structures transcend through it. The Hell's Angels, however, clearly formed a symptom of a cracked society; embodied the denial of what had been denied to them. They represented contradictory roles when trying to reach a new kind of community in everyday life on the one hand, and on the other refusing to push the boundaries that the system had imposed to them.

The Hippies rebelled against the past, against the degradation of a system; the Hell's Angels fought against the future. Both groups were two sides of the same coin, the so-called counterculture, in terms that Norman Mailer described in "The White Negro": "One is Hip or one is Square... one is a rebel or one conforms, one is a frontiersman in the Wild West of American night life, or else a Square cell doomed willy-nilly to conform if one is to succeed" (2).

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## Kennedy and Kahlo: Identity and Gender Issues in Biography

**Abstract:** The following article pairs John F. Kennedy and Frida Kahlo with the intent of probing identity issues. The upshot of this investigation also poses questions regarding gender and biography as well. While Kahlo, the renowned Mexican postcolonial artist and life-long Communist supporter may seem an unlikely bedfellow for Kennedy, the privileged Irish son who tried to dismantle Communism, I argue this coupling serves to place in relief issues about identity. Kahlo is a kind of political and gendered Other. In discussing this pairing, the following discussion relies on Chris Matthews' core biography *Jack Kennedy: Elusive Hero* and Hayden Herrera's biographical studies of Frida Kahlo, *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* and *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings*.

**Keywords:** Frida Kahlo, John F. Kennedy, Identity, Gender, Biography

### Introduction

This year (2013) marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy (1917-1963). The commemoration of this event is the driving force behind a plethora of new publications about his life, death, and identity and the re-emergence of classic investigations on the same subjects. Participating in the memorial celebrations, Rasnov's annual film festival, 2013, invited Chris Matthews to speak on his *Jack Kennedy: Elusive Hero*, which remains a core text on the 35<sup>th</sup> President.

While past commemorative events on Kennedy have frequently discussed parallels between President Kennedy and Democratic President Lincoln, the following tribute to Kennedy will couple him with Frida Kahlo, a Mexican artist known to many as the wife of Diego Rivera, the infamous muralist who was commissioned by the Rockefellers, among other famous capitalists, to decorate U.S. public spaces. In particular, it will focus on Chris Matthews' biography mentioned above and Hayden Herrera's *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* and *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings*. Kennedy and Kahlo might seem like strange bedfellows, yet, this paper will argue that the President who tried to dismantle Communism is placed in relief by juxtaposing his life with that of the postcolonial and life-long Communist supporter. Kahlo is a kind of political and gendered Other of this privileged son of a wealthy Irish patrician and former United States Ambassador to the United Kingdom. Together, their stories also highlight possible gender differences in biographical and life-writing.

Before examining the details of the Kahlo—Kennedy parallel, it might be of benefit to review the “astonishing coincidences” between Lincoln and Kennedy which surfaced in the course of earlier commemorative efforts, as it offers an informative overview of the Kennedy presidency. Among the shared features of these Democratic Presidents, both elected exactly 100 years apart (1860 and 1960, respectively), and slain on a Friday in the presence of their wives, were their concerns with Civil Rights. Certain similarities regarding their assassins and their successors also exist: John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald were Southerners, both of whom were murdered before their trial, but whereas Booth shot Lincoln in a theater and hid in a warehouse, Oswald did the reverse. Both presidents were succeeded by men named Johnson (Andrew b. 1808 and Lyndon b. 1908, respectively).

When comparing Kahlo and Kennedy, one cannot help but be impressed by certain similarities of a more substantial nature. In spite of their opposite political persuasions, both the staunch Communist and

the “Cold Warrior,” were sickly children who suffered, in the absence of maternal comfort; both had near-death experiences early in life with long-lasting repercussions. Both wore a brace/corset for most of their lives and were subjected to multiple back operations which led to incapacitating pain and excessive drug consumption. But, perhaps most importantly for the ongoing study, which focuses not only on their lives, but also on life writing, is their representation as fragmented individuals who were characterized by loneliness and isolation, as well as charismatic gregariousness. Both were avid readers in need of followers and both showed surprising detachment. However, while Kahlo is said to be “torn” or “conflicted” (*The Paintings* 26), Kennedy, by contrast, is coolly “compartmentalized” (Matthews 26, 401).

Chapter two of Chris Matthews’ acclaimed biography of Jack F. Kennedy is entitled “The Two Jacks,” a theme which structures his work on Kennedy, giving rise to the author’s subtitle: “Elusive Hero.” Matthews notes, “from an early age, there were two Jacks. He’d had to learn, from necessity, to separate his life into compartments...” (25-26). The sides are variously described. One side entailed a sickly young boy/man, often bedridden, enduring recurring physical and psychological suffering which led to loneliness and a fear of death. Difficulties in diagnosing his recurring ailments - first thought to be leukemia, but later pinpointed as Addison’s disease—increased his anxiety. The other side of Jack entailed a gregarious, carefree demeanor, stemming from being raised in a privileged household.

At the age of seven Frida, too, had early physical ailments which left scars. In particular, she suffered a misshapen right leg as a result of polio which led to cruel taunts from other children (*Paintings* 26), producing feelings of estrangement and loneliness. To cope with the situation, she developed an “imaginary” friend, an alter ego who was outgoing and assertive. This “friend” remained with her always, according to Herrera. It is this exotic, vibrant figure she would later imitate.

The loneliness experienced by Kennedy and Frida was exacerbated by a lack of motherly warmth and comfort (Matthews 169, 400). Rose Kennedy, attempting to cope with nine children and a philandering husband, was absent much of the time—she was very active outside the home and took many trips abroad—deeply affecting Jack (Matthews 18). Unlike Kennedy, Kahlo literally lost her mother, but even before this, she felt her mother’s absence. Herrera quotes child psychiatrist Dr. Salomon Grimberg “who hypothesizes regarding Frida that, because her mother could not suckle her due to immediate pregnancy and because her mother fell ill soon after she was born, Frida never bonded with her” (*The Paintings* 20). As a result, Frida “could not fully separate from her mother, and she was plagued by an insatiable longing for connectedness” (*The Paintings* 20). In reality, Frida was put in the care of a “nana” or wetnurse who, in turn, was fired due to the discovery of her consumption of alcohol.

Throughout their lives Jack and Frida would attempt to flee from loneliness, ‘to re-create connectedness,’ “through reading, painting, writing, and surrounding themselves with friends both imaginary and real. Kennedy immersed himself in historical and mythic works of literature. He lived vicariously, through men of courage—especially Churchill—whom he wished to emulate” (Matthews 108).

Frida also read voraciously, books from her father’s library which was extensive and varied, as well as from other sources. Later both would also surround themselves with friends and have a string of liaisons (Matthews 106-7, *Paintings* 20).

During their early education both became the “ringleader” of a group of merry pranksters at their elite schools. During Kennedy’s Choate School days, he, along with Lem Billings, a son of a Philadelphia physician, formed the “Muckers.” Together they were known as “Public Enemies Number One and Two on the Choate campus” (Matthews 21). Lem, according to Matthews, “counterbalanced the neglect” of Rose Kennedy. The Muckers, a group of 13 of Kennedy’s peers, were derisively named for the traditional jobs held by Irish immigrants during the horse-and-buggy days, namely, street cleaners or manure removers. Kennedy discovered charisma could attract others and overcome Irish prejudice at this early age.

Like JFK, Frida countered her loneliness by attracting followers; she became a “ringleader” of the Cachuchas, a group of seven boys and two girls, attending the National Preparatory School, a school which

prided itself on enrolling “the cream of Mexico’s youth” (*Paintings* 30). The name Cachuchas was derived from the students’ caps. Among the targets of the pranksters was Diego Rivera, Mexico’s most famous mural painter who was commissioned in the 1920s to decorate the walls of their school, as well as those of other public buildings throughout Mexico, as part of the indigenous emphasis after the revolution. Diego would later become Frida’s husband.

Herrera notes that Frida “shared with her cuates (pals) a boyish, comradely loyalty that would characterize her friendships and even her loves, for the rest of her life” (*Paintings* 31). The above comment has resonance for Kennedy as well: throughout his life, he would repeatedly gather various groups of followers—first at Choate, then in the navy and finally in politics. The “Irish Mafia,” a number of loyal friends he knew from his early years, including Ken O’Donnell, Larry O’Brien, and David Powers and later Jack’s brother Bobby—who would also play the tough guy doing the work JFK could not or would not—helped him succeed. Recognizing the need for a broad-base appeal in politics, Kennedy would later add Ted Sorenson, his speech writer and aid; Mark Dalton, his press secretary; and Dalton’s successor, Billy Sutton (Matthews 108). As long-term health issues continued to haunt both Kennedy and Frida, this compensatory pattern persisted.

### Transformative Experiences

Both Kennedy and Frida would achieve temporary wholeness as a result of a traumatic, transformative experience which simultaneously further endangered their well-being. Kennedy’s occurred as part of his WWII experience when his navy PT boat was split in two by a Japanese destroyer. Frida’s involved a chance collision in which her bus was severed by a tram. According to Mathews, Kennedy’s experience enabled him to be the hero he had earlier only read about (41). Herrera argues that Frida’s accident and its aftermath forced her “to try to find wholeness by painting self-portraits in which she turns her body inside out...” (38). Interestingly, both experiences entailed physical repercussions. While Kennedy would subsequently try to mask his pain, to give the impression of health, Frida would call attention to hers.

During WWII, Kennedy entered the service with much difficulty—he was refused several times due to his health problems. Being assigned the position of skipper of PT 109 with twelve “under his command” he would replay his Choate days, with a difference. His boat, which was directed to patrol the straits in the Solomon Islands, was sabotaged when an undetected Japanese destroyer hit it, shirring it in two and leaving him and his men to sink or swim in a remote Pacific location surrounded by islands full of the enemy. Kennedy’s leadership skills clicked in at this point: through extraordinary bravery, he managed to save the lives of all but two of his men. The enduring ordeal, which occurred over four days, necessitated that Kennedy swim for more than four hours, repeatedly, while hauling one of his severely burned crew members in his teeth. Although he swam out in the channel to hail other PT boats, none came. Finally, the team was rescued when a message he carved on a coconut was intercepted by a New Zealander.

Upon returning from his PT 109 experience, Kennedy had not only malaria, but “chronic back disease of the lower lumbar” (Matthews 60). In June 1944 he endured the first of a long series of back surgeries. The operation left an eight-inch wound that never healed. Contemporary with this, was the premature death of his beloved and idealized older brother, Joe Sr., (1944) and his younger sister Kathleen, reinforcing his preoccupation with death (Matthews 110). While awaiting surgery, he was simultaneously awarded the Navy and Marine Medal for “extremely heroic conduct.” Ironically, the event which has often been blamed for exacerbating Kennedy’s poor health, also propelled him into the role of hero in more ways than one. Being bedridden would provide a catalyst for the writing and publication of a work about his experience, which, in turn, helped him enter a successful career in politics. According to Matthews, Kennedy’s PT 109 experience brought the “two Jacks” into temporary alignment.

The traumatic and formative accident in Frida’s early adulthood that molded her character, profession, and the future, also forced an alignment among her fractured parts, according to Herrera. Medical documentation indicated that the tram’s “steel rod had entered a hip and come out through her vagina”

(Herrera 35) which explains why she had difficulty carrying a baby to term. This accident caused three breaks in her spinal column; a fractured pelvis, collarbone, and two ribs; a broken right leg and foot; and a dislocated left shoulder. Chronic back pain plagued her throughout her life as a result of this. Later, she was also recognized as having suffered from spinal bifida, a congenital malformation of the lower spine (*The Paintings* 36). Kennedy's eight-inch wound that never healed, echoed details of Kahlo's story of repeated back surgeries.

Herrera tells us, "The accident and its painful aftermath [as said before] made Frida into an artist" (*The Paintings* 38). A mirror was installed above her bed so she could see herself, the subject of many of her pictures: "In her paintings Frida is, like an accident victim, passive and immobilized but when she set about painting that passive image, she was driven by an amazing force of will" (*The Paintings* 38).

Matthews' makes a similar comment about Kennedy when he notes that only through a courageous and "extraordinary force of will" did Jack achieve the "shining image" full of "vitality" for which he was so often remembered. "Jack loved courage, hated war; that conflict would define his love of Churchill and would define how he viewed himself" (Matthews 39).

After successfully ascending the political ladder, Kennedy suffered so much back pain that he elected to have a dangerous back operation which was complicated by his Addison's disease and the steroids he took for it. He was bedridden, again—this time for at least six months—during which time he took up oil painting (Matthews 190), but then turned to writing. Working "upside down on a board suspended above him" (Matthews 191), he, a little like Frida, penned his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Profiles in Courage*, a work which highlighted the important, but "highly unpopular" decisions of eight U. S. Senators: "...the whole concept of the really gutsy decisions made by men with seats in the Senate fascinated him" (Matthews 191). Kennedy wrote the opening and concluding chapters and controlled the overall output, but Ted Sorenson, his aid, wrote many of the middle chapters (Matthews 191).

Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage*, like Kahlo's visual art, was recognized as a significant emotional experience. According to political columnist and personal friend, Joseph Alsop, "Something very important happened inside him, I think, when he had that illness, because he came out of it a very much more serious fellow than he was prior to it. He had gone through the valley of the shadow of death, and he had displayed immense courage, which he'd always had" (Matthews 193).

### Compartmentalized vs. Conflicted

Although many uncanny parallels exist between the fragmented profiles of Kennedy and Kahlo, the two are, in the end, more fundamentally opposite than alike. Whereas Kennedy hid his pain, his corset, his crutches - indeed, successful politics demanded it - and tightly controlled his fractured identity, Frida seems to have externalized it or tried to exorcize it. Matthews uses the word "compartmentalization" to sum up Kennedy's way of handling his life. Herrera, on the other hand, sees Kahlo as "torn" and full of "tension" (*The Paintings* 4). While both biographers present specific evidence to support their choice of terms, questions arise regarding this difference. Are "compartmentalization" and "conflict" innate to the individuals and/or are they aligned to different expectations about gender issues and/or to the biographical genre? Before investigating the expectations, let us explore some evidence used by the respective biographers to justify their claims.

According to Matthews, Jack, out of necessity, "continued to keep tight the compartments of his life. Like the ship's captain he still was, he knew he couldn't sink if he kept each of them strongly secure from the other" (106). Such a separation had also a positive side we are told; it offered Kennedy a type of freedom, "Being able to enter each world without the baggage from the other gave him the breezy, debonair life he wanted" (Matthews 107).

Two traits which contributed to the clear divisions Kennedy maintained entailed his rigid demarcation of inner and outer social circles and his ability to target core problems and, subsequently, resolve them.

The demarcated line drawn between Kennedy's social relationships often led to what Matthews has shown to be a cold, detached side of his personality. Frequently, this was hidden from sight, until the line was crossed. The "Irish Mafia," who surrounded Jack, were part of Kennedy's inner circle, other followers discovered, often unhappily, the limits of their relationship with Kennedy and his penchant for rigidly compartmentalizing. According to Mary Davis, his secretary, he had many "associations" although not many "close personal friendships" (Matthews 107).

One example of this involved his devoted secretary, Mary Davis, herself. In spite of her long service and excellent performance, Kennedy refused to pay her or those under her management the going wage; he would let her leave without much disturbance. Matthew's description of this episode puts Kennedy in a less than favorable light. It shows not only his disrespect for women, but his cold disregard for the long devotion of many members of his staff. He seemed to keep office personal at a distance. Mary was just one among many who felt hurt by him.

Ted Sorenson, who worked side-by-side with Kennedy for years and "collaborated" with him on his Pulitzer prize-winning book, also noted Kennedy's ability to separate and demarcate (Matthews 107). In spite of working closely with Kennedy, Ted said, upon his death, "I do not remember everything about him, because I never knew everything about him. No one did. Different parts of his life, work, and thoughts were seen by many people—but no one saw it all" (Matthews 159).

Charlie Bartlett, a journalist and long-time friend, illuminated the other aspect of Kennedy's character which contributed to his ability to compartmentalize, "When you discussed anything with him, politics mostly, he'd go right to the bottom. He had a wonderful way of separating all the crap from the key issue..." (Matthews 160). This dispassionate analysis, as mentioned above, gave him a certain independence. Matthews presents numerous examples of this on the political front. While Kennedy had early political defeats—the deception he suffered at the hands of the military and the whipping he received from Khrushchev—he always seems to have learned from his defeats and settled the score without suffering inner conflicts.

But Kennedy's ability to demarcate also depended greatly on a core of loyal "brothers." The "Irish Mafia" proved indispensable to him, as did Bobby, a type of alter ego who expressed the anger Kennedy often preferred not to exhibit. And although Kennedy separated his political views from those of his father's, he often relied on the clout exerted by his father's money and fame. Kennedy was never betrayed by his protective coterie. This would enable him to maintain a sense of control.

By contrast, Herrera speaks of Frida's "schismatic" interior, "turn[ing] her body inside out"; "she painted her body as subject for the artist's scrutiny, the female in the passive role of pretty object, victim of pain, or participant in nature's cycles" (*The Paintings* 136-7). According to Frida's biographer, "visualizations of her damaged body act as a metaphor for the fragmented or disintegrating Self, reflecting profound human concerns that... address wide-ranging ontological issues" (*Frida* 254).

However, there is further fragmentation in her works. In contrast to the damaged body, the face "is regal, self-willed, almost androgynous... and gave her features a somewhat steely cast" (*The Paintings* 136-7). Herrera also notes a series of paintings in which doubles are locked together by the frame or by other devices (*The Paintings* 10). This is apparent in "Tree of Hope" which depicts a female-wounded body next to a dispassionate female observer in Tehuana attire, an embodiment of indigenous female strength. (The Tehuana dress is the apparel worn by one of the matriarchal tribes in Mexico [Baddeley 12]). Another painting of doubles is "The Two Fridas" in which look-alike figures of Frida sit side-by-side. In explaining this picture in her diary, Frida makes reference to her imaginary friend conjured when she had polio. Although Frida "tried" to gain wholeness through her paintings, she never seemed to achieve this (*The Paintings* 29).

In her real life, Frida countered her insecurities [and pain] by becoming "first a tomboy" and later an exotic personality who resembled her "friend," as said before. But even though she became extroverted,



she never lost the sick child's awareness of the distance between her inner and outer worlds" (*Frida* 28-29).

If Kennedy assesses and extracts himself from painful relationships, Kahlo does not. She replays them, seemingly unable to resolve conflict. Although she may not have had Kennedy's acute skill of problem solving, she did seek out new relationships in order to cope with Diego's many sexual betrayals, most notably his affair with her sister. Kahlo's lovers, among whom were numbered the most famous personalities of the 20th-century, male and females, never seemed totally satisfying, however. Perhaps, in part, because her motive was revenge. Even her famous affair with Trotsky was initiated by a need to "get back" at Diego. She could not detach herself from him, for while he offered her pain, he also offered something positive.

As is apparent from the above, Kahlo did not have the buffers or protectorate Kennedy had. Although Kahlo's father circulated, for a time, among the elite social circles as the official photographer for the Mexican government, he was not of the stature of Joseph Kennedy. Nor did he possess the strength of character or confidence of Kennedy. His fits of epilepsy also proved problematic. While Diego and Cristina, Frida's sister, remained with Frida throughout her life, occupying the role played by the "Irish Mafia" in Kennedy's, they proved unreliable. Kahlo did and did not accept Diego's affairs. Diego, who was much older than Frida and considered the greater artist (during her lifetime), had the upper hand and an insatiable appetite for women. Although Frida knew what to expect and initially thought she could accept his "loyalty," without sexual fidelity, she could not, especially when Diego bedded her sister.

Herrera quotes both Kahlo's husband, Diego Rivera, and before that, Kahlo's first serious boyfriend, Alexandraro Gomez Arias, to substantiate her point about Frida's ongoing conflict. The latter once said, Frida "was so contradictory and multiple that you could say there were many Fridas. Maybe none the one she wanted to be" ("Un Testimonio Sobre Frida Kahlo" qtd. in *Paintings* 136).

### Differences in Biographical Emphasis

Matthews and Herrera's biographical studies differ in the way each is framed. Kahlo's seems a much more interiorized study of a relationship between an artist and her spouse, who also happened to be a more famous artist. Private and public are intermixed. Kennedy's, on the other hand, focuses attention more on same-sex relationships and his public life. While there are good reasons for these choices, one wonders if the biographers' analyses were determined, in part, by gender assumptions. Clearly compartmentalization suggests control, an attribute traditionally linked to men. While Matthews includes anecdotes of Kennedy in which he is not able to compartmentalize—many of which have to do with his personal or domestic life—these are rare and moreover truncated almost prematurely. In spite of the fact that Kennedy and Kahlo's identities reflect different personalities and cultures, one wonders if the profile of Kennedy would have changed slightly if Matthew had included a little more about the domestic life of Kennedy.

One example when compartmentalization fails to work for Kennedy is provided by Charlie Bartlett, a life-long friend. During Kennedy's recovery from back surgery in June of 1944, Charlie relates what he calls a "singular incident" at a Palm Beach party: "All he [Kennedy] felt was cynicism—everybody dancing, the lights, the women. It was the only time I ever saw him reacting like a real soldier. It was the rapidity of his move from the Pacific to Palm Beach, the juxtaposition" (60-61).

Kennedy apparently could not bear such frivolity in the face of the sacrifice he had experienced, either personally and/or vicariously.

Another example included in "Elusive Hero" regards the death of Jack and Jackie's son Patrick, which occurred soon after the child's birth (Matthews 388). Kennedy could not keep Patrick's death off his mind, which Matthews shows but truncates by a reference to the mysteries of religion. Matthews says, "It's always difficult to penetrate another person's religious beliefs... When it came to family and loss, his



[Jack's] faith regularly showed itself" (388). Jack's reaction, in any case, diverged enormously from the compartmentalization he showed when Jackie was hospitalized and miscarried in 1956. During that earlier event, Jack cavalierly left for Europe with his buddies immediately after his success at the Chicago Democratic Convention, in spite of Jackie's eminent delivery. Apparently, he saw no reason to return immediately after the miscarriage, since the child was dead (Matthews 212). Bobby, as so often, came to the rescue.

Still another "rare" moment in Matthews' biography is when Jack displays "jealousy." This occurs during a visit Jackie makes to Onassis, the charming Greek tycoon she will eventually marry after Kennedy's assassination. In spite of Kennedy's warning against the meeting, Jackie goes off with her younger sister Lee—the one actually interested in Onassis at that time—to spend time on his yacht. Kennedy is clearly uneasy. However, Matthews circumvents further uneasiness by following up the incident with a discussion of a passionate love letter Jackie wrote to her husband while on the Onassis' yacht. Such closure seems unsatisfying and unwarranted. Had Matthew's followed the thread a little further and tried to account for such a puzzling letter, the biographer might have alluded to Jack's dependence on Jackie if not sexually, emotionally. His characterization of Jackie seemed to further close down the discussion.

Readers are told, she shared Jack's detachment and "elusiveness." She too was charismatic but cool (Matthews 169, 402). They were both superb "actors" who worked a crowd like few power couples. In the biographer's view, this was one factor that kept them together. Matthew suggests Jackie's father, Jack Bouvier, who also was more than a decade older than her mother and a womanizer, prepared Jackie for Jack's compulsive affairs. She had, in effect, stoically accepted her lot (Matthews 160-1). This characterization goes against many others of her, for example *Mrs. Kennedy* by Barbara Leaming which was published in 2001.

Turning to Kahlo's life, we find public and private are more intricately interconnected in a way in which they are not in Kennedy's. The fact that her spouse was also a renowned artist, tends to foster this intermixture.

When Diego and Cristina betrayed Frida, which the "Irish Mafia" never did, or dared to do, she felt she had no reliable fallback except her "imaginary" friend, first conjured after her bout with polio. This was an alter ego "within." This may have resulted in a kind of schizophrenia depicted in the fictional biography of Kahlo written by Barbara Mujica, a Georgetown professor and author twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Granted Kennedy did feel betrayal at the hands of the military during his early years as president, but he soon remedied that situation with the help of those closer to him, including Bobby.

## Conclusions

Pairing Kennedy and Kahlo enables one to have a more rounded view of the identity of the 35<sup>th</sup> president of the United States by showcasing more clearly Chris Matthews' strengths and gaps—or better said, the potential sites for further research. It also flushes out questions regarding the larger issues of life writing and gender. While Kennedy, as depicted by Matthews, seems more removed from conflict than Kahlo, the former never fully achieves wholeness in "Elusive Hero," as the subtitle makes clear.

Difference in gender expectations, in general, and as they affect commercial biography specifically may indeed have a bearing on the identity profiles of Kennedy and Kahlo and others. Even as far back as the first wave of feminism, insights emerged regarding differences in gender and borders of Self, i.e. men, in general, have more clearly demarcated borders of Self than females due to differences in psychological development (i.e., Helen Chodorow). In a different vein, the differences shown in Kennedy and Kahlo's lives may also have to do with gender and conventions of life studies. As Oriana Baddeley discussed in a comparison of Kahlo and Van Gogh, women's personal lives overshadow their professional ones, whereas this is not the case with men. Anne Beer, a successful academic and commercial biographer, also

investigates gender differences in life studies. She argues that the relationships among authors, subjects and audiences vary depending on whether one is dealing with a female or a male. Women's biographies generate a closer bond between their subject and audience, she argues. Deciding which of the considerations above offer the better insight or, if all play a role, is extremely complex but it is also critically important to future scholarship.

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